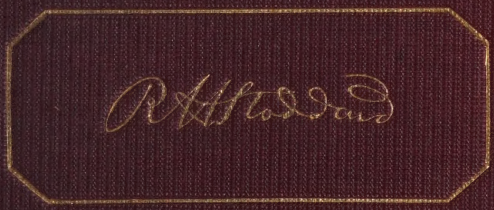

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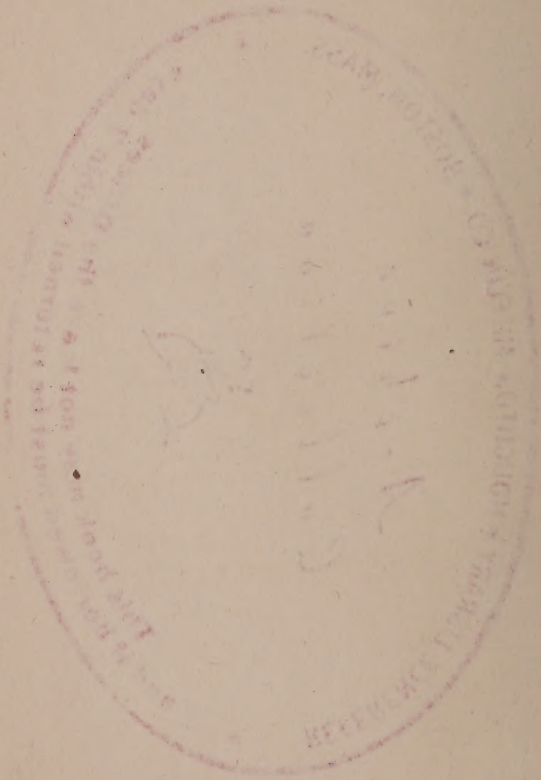

THE

BOOK OF THE EAST,

AND

OTHER POEMS.

BY

RICHARD HENRY STODDARD.

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A WOMAN'S POEM.

YOU say you love me, and you lay
Your hand and fortune at my feet:
I thank you, sir, with all my heart,
For love is sweet.

It is but little to you men,
To whom the doors of Life stand wide;
But much, how much to woman! She
Has naught beside.

You make the worlds wherein you move,
You rule your tastes, or coarse, or fine;
Dine, hunt, or fish, or waste your gold
At dice and wine.

Our world (alas, you make that too!)
Is narrower, — shut in four blank walls:
Know you, or care, what light is there?
What shadow falls?

We read the last new novel out,
And live in dream-land till it ends:
We write romantic school-girl notes,
That bore our friends.

We learn to trill Italian songs,
And thrum for hours the tortured keys:
We think it pleases you, and we
But live to please.

We feed our birds, we tend our flowers,
(Poor in-door things of sickly bloom,)
Or play the housewife in our gloves,
And dust the room.

But some of us have hearts and minds,—
So much the worse for us and you;
For grant we seek a better life,
What can we do?

We cannot build and sail your ships,
Or drive your engines; we are weak,
And ignorant of the tricks of Trade:
To think, and speak,

Or write some earnest, stammering words
Alone is ours, and that you hate;
So forced within ourselves again,
We sigh and wait.

Ah! who can tell the bitter hours,
The dreary days, that women spend?
Their thoughts unshared, their lives unknown,
Without a friend!

Without a friend? And what is he,
Who, like a shadow, day and night,
Follows the woman he prefers,
Lives in her sight?

Her lover, he: a gallant man,
Devoted to her every whim;
He vows to die for her, so she
Must live for him!

We should be very grateful, sir,
That, when you 've nothing else to do,
You waste your idle hours on us, —
So kind of you!

Profuse in studied compliments,
Your manners, like your clothes, are fine,
Though both at times are somewhat strong
Of smoke and wine!

What can we hope to know of you?
Or you of us? We act our parts:
We love in jest: it is the play
Of hands, not hearts!

You grant my bitter words are true
Of others, not of you and me;
Your love is steady as a star:
But we shall see.

You say you love me: have you thought
How much those little words contain?
Alas! a world of happiness,
And worlds of pain!

You know, or should, your nature now,
Its needs and passions. Can I be
What you desire me? Do you find
Your all in me?

You do. But have you thought that I
May have my ways and fancies, too?
You love me; well, but have you thought
If I love you?

But think again. You know me not:
I, too, may be a butterfly,
A costly parlor doll on show
For you to buy.

You trust me wholly? One word more.
You see me young: they call me fair:
I think I have a pleasant face,
And pretty hair.

But by and by my face will fade;
It must with time, it may with care:
What say you to a wrinkled wife,
With thin, gray hair?

You care not, you: in youth, or age,
Your heart is mine, while life endures:
Is 't so? Then, Arthur, here 's my hand
My heart is yours.

WITHOUT AND WITHIN.

I.

THE night is dark, and the winter winds
Go stabbing about with their icy spears;
The sharp hail rattles against the panes,
And melts on my cheek like tears.

'T is a terrible night to be out of doors,
But some of us must be, early and late;
We need n't ask who, for don't we know
It has all been settled by Fate?

Not woman, but man. Give woman her flowers,
Her dresses, her jewels, or what she demands:
The work of the world must be done by man,
Or why has he brawny hands?

As I feel my way in the dark and cold,
I think of the chambers warm and bright, —
The nests where these delicate birds of ours
Are folding their wings to-night.

Through the luminous windows, above and below,
I catch a glimpse of the life they lead:
Some sew, some sing, others dress for the ball,
While others, fair students, read.

There 's the little lady who bears my name, —
She sits at my table now, pouring her tea;
Does she think of me as I hurry home,
Hungry and wet? Not she.

She helps herself to the sugar and cream
In a thoughtless, dreamy, nonchalant way;
Her hands are white as the virgin rose
That she wore on her wedding day.

My clumsy fingers are stained with ink, —
The badge of the Ledger, the mark of Trade;
But the money I give her is clean enough,
In spite of the way it is made.

I wear out my life in the counting-room
Over day-book and cash-book, Bought and Sold;
My brain is dizzy with anxious thought,
My skin is as sallow as gold.

How does she keep the roses of youth
Still fresh in her cheek? My roses are flown:
It lies in a nutshell, — why do I ask?
A woman's life is her own.

She gives me a kiss when we part for the day,
Then goes to her music, blithe as a bird;
She reads it at sight, and the language too,
Though I know never a word!

She sews a little, makes collars and sleeves,
Or embroiders me slippers (always too small),
Nets silken purses (for me to fill),
Often does nothing at all

But dream in her chamber, holding a flower,
Or reading my letters — she 'd better read me;
Even now, while I am freezing with cold,
She is cosily sipping her tea.

If I ever reach home I shall laugh aloud
At the sight of a roaring fire once more;
She must wait, I think, till I thaw myself,
For the usual kiss at the door.

I 'll have with my dinner a bottle of port,
To warm up my blood and soothe my mind;
Then a little music, for even I
Like music — when I have dined.

I 'll smoke a pipe in the easy-chair,
And feel her behind me patting my head;
Or, drawing the little one on my knee,
Chat till the hour for bed.

II.

Will he never come? I have watched for him
Till the misty panes are roughened with sleet;
I can see no more: shall I never hear
The welcome sound of his feet?

I think of him in the lonesome night,
Tramping along with a weary tread,
And wish he were here by the cheery fire,
Or I were there in his stead.

I sit by the grate, and hark for his step,
And stare in the fire with a troubled mind;
The glow of the coals is bright in my face,
But my shadow is dark behind.

I think of woman, and think of man, —
The tie that binds and the wrongs that part,
And long to utter in burning words
What I feel to-night in my heart.

No weak complaint of the man I love,
No praise of myself, or my sisterhood;
But — something that women understand —
By men never understood.

Their natures jar in a thousand things;
Little matter, alas, who is right or wrong,
She goes to the wall! *"She is weak,"* they say:
It is that which makes them strong.

But grant us weak (as in truth we are
In our love for them), they should make us strong;
But do they? Will they? *"Woman is weak!"*
Is the burden still of their song.

Wherein am I weaker than Arthur, pray?
He has, as he should, a sturdier frame,
And he labors early and late for me,
But I — I could do the same.

My hands are willing, my brain is clear,
The world is wide, and the workers few;
But the work of the world belongs to man,
There is nothing for woman to do!

Yes, she has the holy duties of home,
A husband to love and children to bear;
The softer virtues, the social arts, —
In short, a life without care!

So our masters say. But what do they know
Of our lives and feelings when they are away?
Our household duties, our petty tasks, —
The nothings that waste the day?

Nay, what do they care? 'T is enough for them
That their homes are pleasant; they seek their ease:
One takes a wife to flatter his pride,
Another, to keep his keys!

They say they love us; perhaps they do,
In a masculine way, as they love their wine:
But the soul of a woman needs something more,
Or it suffers at times like mine

Not that Arthur is ever unkind
In word or deed, for he loves me well;
But I fear he thinks me as weak as the rest;
(And I may be, who can tell?)

I should die if he changed, or loved me less,
For I live at best but a restless life;
Yet he may, for they say the kindest men
Grow tired of a sickly wife.

O, love me, Arthur! my lord, my life,
If not for my love, and my womanly fears,
At least for your child. But I hear his step,—
He must not find me in tears.

AFTER THE FUNERAL.

NEVER any more,
Till my broken dream of life
Is swallowed up in death,
Shall I look upon my wife.
I prayed that she might live,
But my prayers could not save;
For here I am, alone,
And she is in the grave!

It seems an age to me
Since I saw the coffin there;
The lid was off, and lo,
A face within the square, —
A pale but happy face, —
Sweet lips without a breath;
How beautiful if Sleep,
How terrible if Death!

I lifted up the child,
In her little mourning gown;
But she turned away her eyes
Until I put her down.
They took the coffin out
In the blinding light of day;
The black hearse moved on,
And the coaches crept away!

We stood around the grave
While the hollow prayers were said,
And the heavy, wet earth
Was shovelled on the dead;
As it struck the coffin-lid
With a dull and dreadful sound,
It seemed to strike my heart, —
They led me from the ground.

But all is over now,
And it almost soothes my pain
To think, whatever comes,
She cannot die again!

The blow has fallen, — I know
The worst that death can give:
The worst of life's to come,
For I must learn to live!

What must I do to live?
I will play my part, —
Ply my subtle brain,
Forget my stricken heart;
Go again on 'Change,
Buy, and sell, and scheme;
Fit my ships for sea, —
Anything but dream!

I know the day will pass,
In the stir and light;
But how can I endure
The coming home at night?
No watching at the pane,
No meeting at the door,
No loving, wifely kiss, —
No Alice any more!

ON THE TOWN.

THE lamps are lighted, the streets are full,
For, coming and going, like waves of the sea,
Thousands are out this beautiful night;
They jostle each other, but shrink from me.
Men hurry by with a stealthy glance,
Women pass with their eyes cast down;
Even the children seem to know
The shameless girl of the town.

Hated and shunned I walk the street,
Hunting, — for what? For my prey, 't is said;
I look at it, though, in a different light,
For this nightly shame is my daily bread: —
My food, my shelter, the clothes I wear,
Only for this I might starve or drown;
The world has disowned me, — what can I do
But live and die on the town?

The world is cruel. It may be right
To crush the harlot, but, grant it so,
What made her the guilty thing she is?
For she was innocent once, you know.
'T was love! — that terrible word tells all!
She loved a man and blindly believed
His vows, his kisses, his crocodile tears, —
Of course the fool was deceived!

What had I to gain by a moment's sin,
To weigh in the scale with my innocent years,
My womanly shame, my ruined name,
My father's curses, my mother's tears?
The love of a man! — It was something to give,
Was it worth it? The price was a soul paid down, —
Did I get a soul, *his* soul in exchange?
Behold me here on the town!

"Your guilt was heavy," the world will say,
"And heavy, heavy your doom must be;
For to pity and pardon woman's fall
Is to set no value on chastity.

You undervalue the virgin's crown,
The spotless honor that makes her dear."
But I ought to know what the bauble is worth,
When the loss of it brings me here!

But pity and pardon? Who are you
To talk of pardon, pity, to me?
What I ask is justice, justice, sir, —
Let both be punished, or both go free.
If it be in woman a dreadful thing,
What is it in man, now? Come, be just:
(Remember, she falls through her love for him,
He, through his selfish lust!)

Tell me what is done to the wretch
Who tempts, and riots in woman's fall?
His father curses, and casts him off?
His friends forsake? He is scorned of all?
Not he: his judges are men like himself,
Or thoughtless women, who humor their whim:
"Young blood," "Wild oats," "Better hush it up":
They soon forget it — in him!

Even his mother, who ought to know
The woman-nature, and how it is won,
Frames a thousand excuses for him,
Because, forsooth, the man is her son!
You have daughters, madam, (he told me so,)
Fair, innocent daughters, — "Woman, what then?"
Some mother may have a son like yours,
Bid them beware of men!

I saw his coach in the street to-day,
Dashing along on the sunny side,
With a liveried driver on the box:
Lolling back in her listless pride,
The wife of his bosom took the air.
She was bought in the mart where hearts are sold:
I gave myself away for his love,
She sold herself for his gold!

He lives, they say, in a princely way,
Flattered and feasted. One dark night
Some devil led me to pass his house:
I saw the windows a blaze of light;

The music whirled in a maddening round,
I heard the fall of the dancers' feet:
Bitter, bitter the thoughts I had,
Standing there in the street!

Back to my gaudy den I went,
Marched to my room in grim despair,
Dried my eyes, painted my cheeks,
And fixed a flower or two in my hair.
Corks were popping, wine was flowing,
I seized a bumper, and tossed it down:
One must do something to kill the time,
And fit one's self for the town!

I meet his boy in the park sometimes,
And my heart runs over towards the child;
A frank little fellow with fearless eyes,
He smiles at me as his father smiled!
I hate the man, but I love the boy,
For I think what my own, had he lived, would be:
Perhaps it is *he*, come back from the dead,—
To his father, alas! not me.

But I stand too long in the shadow here,
Let me out in the light again.
Now for insult, blows, perhaps,
And, bitterer still, my own disdain.
I take my place in the crowded street,
Not like the simple women I see: —
You may cheat them, men, as much as you please,
You wear no masks with me!

I know ye! Under your honeyed words
There lurks a serpent; your oaths are lies;
There 's a lustful fire in your hungry hearts,
I see it flaming up in your eyes!
Cling to them, ladies, and shrink from me,
Or rail at my boldness. Well, have you done?
Madam, your husband knows me well;
Mother, I know your son!

But go your ways, and I 'll go mine;
Call me opprobrious names if you will;
The truth is bitter, think I have lied:
"A harlot?" Yes! but a woman still!

God said of old to a woman like me,
"Go, sin no more," or your Bibles lie;
But you, you mangle his merciful words
To "Go, and sin till you die!"

Die! — the word has a pleasant sound,
The sweetest I 've heard this many a year.
It seems to promise an end to pain;
Anyway it will end it here!
Suppose I throw myself in the street?
Before the horses could trample me down,
Some would-be friend might snatch me up,
And thrust me back on the town!

But look, — the river! From where I stand
I see it, I almost hear it flow.
Down on the dark and lonely pier —
It is but a step — I can end my woe!
A plunge, a splash, and all will be o'er,
The death-black waters will drag me down;
God knows where! But no matter where,
So I am off the town!

THE BALLAD OF VALLEY FORGE.

IT was a night in winter,
Some seventy years ago;
The bleak and barren landscape
Was blurred with driving snow.

You caught a glimpse of uplands,
And guessed where valleys lay;
The trees were broken shadows,
A house was something gray.

Only the western forests
Stood sharply, black and bare;
For there the blood-red sunset
Still shot a sullen glare.

In an old New England farm-house,
That snowy winter night,
In the spacious chimney corner,
Where the logs were blazing bright,

An aged man was sitting
In the cheery light and heat,
With his head upon his bosom,
And the watch-dog at his feet.

Beside him sat his grandson,
In a high-backed oaken chair,
And the glow of ten sweet summers
Was golden in his hair.

The man was Nathan Baldwin,
And many a tale is told
Of how he marched, and suffered
With hunger, and with cold.

Of brave old Gran'ther Baldwin
Shall be the song I sing,
Who fought for Independence
When George the Third was king.

Before him hung two muskets,
With clumsy, dinted stocks;
The bayonets were mounted,
The flints were in the locks, —

Two rusty Queen Anne's muskets,
Whose pans were smoky still, —
The spoil of British soldiers
Who charged at Bunker Hill.

They fell by Nathan's rifle;
He snatched their dropping guns,
And sent them to the farm-house
To arm his stalwart sons.

They hung against the chimney
That windy winter night,
Unseen by Nathan Baldwin,
Who saw another sight.

He sat there in his settle
Before the dancing flame,
And on the wall behind him
His shadow went and came.

He dozed behind his grandson,
Whose thoughts were on the snow,
While his eyes were on the muskets,
And the powder-horns below.

"Tell me a story, Gran'ther,"
The little dreamer said;
But Nathan did not answer,
Though he smoothed his curly head.

He heard the shrill winds whistle,
He saw the embers glow,
And, dropping down the chimney,
The ragged flakes of snow.

The sap in the back-log spluttered,
And through the puffs of smoke,
Like a sharp discharge of rifles,
A crackling volley broke.

"Tell me a story, Gran'ther;
Not that of Riding-Hood,
Nor how the robins buried
The children in the wood;

"But how you fought the Indians,
So many years ago;
Or Valley Forge in winter,
And all about the snow."

"In the fall of seventy-seven
(My little Abner, hear),
In the middle of November
Of that unhappy year,

"I marched with Morgan's Rifles,
A corps of gallant men,
To join our wretched army
In the Quaker State of Penn.

"By forced and rapid marches
(We took the shortest way,
A crow-flight through the Jerseys,
And added night to day),—

"By long and weary marches
We crossed the dreary plain:
The winds were wild with winter,
And the sky was dark with rain.

"There was no sun in the daytime,
At night there was no moon:
So Morgan told the fifer
To blow a merry tune.

"Our poor old regimentals
Were more like rags than clothes;
Just fit to flap in cornfields
And scare away the crows.

"You knew our halting-places
By the tatters lying round;
When we came in sight of White Marsh,
Our feet were on the ground.

"We scarcely saw the army,
That cheered as we drew nigh;
But we marched with flying colors,
And our powder, boy, was dry!

"One morning in December
The British came in sight.
Said Morgan, 'Load your rifles,
For here's a chance to fight.'

"Six hundred stout militia,
With Irvine at their head,
Sneaked out to take a volley, —
Of course the cowards fled!

"Howe changed his ground at midnight,
For at the break of day
We saw that he was nearer,
Though still a mile away.

"All day he lay and watched us,
But changed again at night.
When morning came ('t was Sunday)
We saw he meant to fight.

"'Be ready, boys,' said Morgan,
'And let your aim be true.'
At noon the word was, '*Forward!*'
And then the bullets flew!"

"I guess," said Abner, warming,
"You showed 'em how to fight."
"At dusk they lighted watch-fires,
And vanished in the night.

"The General called a council
To meet him in his tent,
And choose our winter quarters,
And all the generals went.

"They sat with maps before them,
And knit their brows awhile;
Some thought of York and Reading,
And others of Carlisle.

"But Washington decided,
When all had spoken round,
That Valley Forge, in Chester,
Should be our winter ground.

"We heard the news at supper,
And said 't was time to go,
For winter was upon us,
And the sky was full of snow.

"So when the dead were buried, —
Some ninety men in all, —
We took the road to Chester,
As the snows began to fall.

"It was a sight to see us,
That dreary winter day,
As we broke up our encampment,
And stretched for miles away.

"The files that came and vanished;
The banners on the wind;
The gallant van of light-horse;
The rifles close behind;—

"Then Poor's brigade, and Glover's;
The heavy guns of Knox;
The train of baggage-wagons,
And the teamsters in their frocks;—

"Climbing the whitened hill-tops,
And swarming on the plain;
And Washington on horseback,
With Harry Lee and Wayne.

"We crossed a wasted country,
With a farm-house here and there:
No smoke-wreaths from the chimneys
Went curling up the air.

"No face at door or window
Looked out as we passed by;
But through the battered sashes
We saw the blank of sky.

"We pushed ahead till nightfall
Closed round our straggling lines,
Then halted in the shelter
Of a ragged belt of pines.

"We lighted fires of brushwood,
And stacked our muskets round;
The teamsters lent us fodder,
And we spread it on the ground.

"'T was bitter, bitter, Abner,
On the frozen ground to lie,
No pillow but a knapsack,
No blanket but the sky!

"We took the road at daybreak,
In the blinding snow and wind;
The wounded went in wagons,—
We left the dead behind.

"The fifers screamed their loudest,
But the winds alone were heard;
The drums in snow were muffled,
And no man spake a word.

"We marched in gloomy silence, —
A sort of grim despair,
That nerved the weak to suffer,
And fired the strong to dare.

"You might have tracked us, Abner,
By the trail of blood we shed;
We bled at every footstep, —
The snow for miles was red!"

"O Gran'ther!" Abner whispered,
But Gran'ther did not speak;
For the tears of eighty winters
Were trickling down his cheek.

The tender child was troubled,
He knew not what to say;
So he clambered up and kissed him,
And wiped the tears away.

"On the seventeenth of December
(The day was still and bright)
We crossed the swollen Schuylkill,
With Valley Forge in sight.

"We saw the smoke of the forges,
We heard the anvils ring;
You should have seen us, Abner,
And heard us shout and sing.

"We pitched our tents by the river,
In a row along the street,
Built fires, and cooked our dinners,
And dressed our bleeding feet.

"Some sat apart with their muskets,
Rubbing the rusty stains;
The teamsters stood by their horses,
And combed the snow from their manes.

"One chopped a stack of brushwood,
Another blew a brand;
I fell asleep at dinner,
With my ration in my hand.

"The next day was Thanksgiving,
And the valley bells were rung;
The farmers drove to meeting,
And a goodly psalm was sung.

"The drummers beat the roll-call,
We gathered in the air;
The chaplain preached a sermon,
And made a touching prayer.

"Next morning we were stirring
As the cocks began to crow,
With our shovels on our shoulders,
To clear away the snow.

"You know what snow is, Abner;
You 've seen the farmers near
Clearing a path to their barn-yards, —
But we had miles to clear.

"It was a dreary prospect,
For the winds were sharp and cold,
And we were nearly naked,
And some, alas, were old!

"The General planned our village;
The streets were east and west.
We dug the snow in trenches,
A dozen men abreast.

"By night the white embankments
Were piled above our heads.
The roads were black with soldiers,
And blocked with carts and sleds;—

"With ox-carts of provisions,
With sleds of wood and hay,
And officers on horseback
That slowly cleared the way.

"And in the windy forest,
Whose moan was like the sea's,
We heard the stroke of axes
And the crash of falling trees;

"The lowing of the oxen,
That hauled the timber down;
The noise of saws and hammers,
And the forges in the town.

"Our huts were built by Christmas,—
Rough logs, a slab the door;
The cracks with clay were plastered;
The frozen ground the floor.

"All through the happy valley
The Christmas cheer was spread;
The farmers ate their turkeys,
And we our mouldy bread.

"Well, there we were all winter,
Ten thousand men, or more.
Ah! how can I remember,
Or speak of what we bore!

"The stupor that benumbed us;
The pains that drove us wild;
The hunger, and the sickness;
The — all but death, my child!

"We huddled in our barracks
For days and days together,
Too weak to stand, too naked
To brave the bitter weather.

"We made us shoes of raw hide,
That stung our tender feet;
We limped about on crutches,
We stumbled in the street.

"I had a burning fever;
I had a freezing chill;
I dreamed of killing Indians;
I dreamed of Bunker Hill.

"The General came to see me
(They told me when I rose),
And your father sat and watched me,
And patched my tattered clothes.

"One night, when I was better,
The guard was ordered out
In front of Varnum's quarters,
Before the Star redoubt.

"I thought I heard them call me
(It was my turn to go),
So I snatched a hat and musket,
And hobbled through the snow;

"Along the grim abatis,
That faced the windy street,
To where the gloomy forest
And swollen river meet;

"Along the roaring river,
Beyond the narrow ford,
Till near the outer picket, —
When all at once I heard

"The General's voice. I hearkened,
And through the darkness broke
His tall, commanding figure,
Wrapt in a martial cloak.

"'Good evening, Nathan Baldwin;
I 'm glad to see you out.'
'It is my night on guard, sir,
Before the Star redoubt.'

"And he: 'Did Morgan send you?
The snow is drifted there.'
I felt he saw my tatters,
And pitied my gray hair.

"'I 'll do my duty, General.'"
"What did the General say?"
"He threw his cloak about me,
And slowly walked away.

"'God bless you, sir!' I shouted;
And, as I strode along,
I laughed and cried together,
And hummed a battle-song.

"I felt my way before me,—
It was too dark to see;
I floundered in a snow-drift,
I ran against a tree.

"The March winds, sharp and cruel,
Their stormy trumpets blew;
Came charging down the hillsides,
And stabbed me through and through.

"I heard the drums in the distance;
I heard the river roar;
I heard the wolves in the forests;
I heard — I heard no more.

"I woke in your father's barrack,
I was lying in his bed;
He stood beside me crying,
Because he thought me dead.

"But hark! I hear him coming,
And mother 's drawing the tea;
His step is on the scraper, —
Run to the door, and see."

The outside latch was lifted,
A draught blew in the room;
They heard him calling, "Mother,"
And, "Abner, fetch a broom."

He stamped his feet in the entry,
And brushed his homespun clothes.
"Well, boys." "Good evening, Reuben.
What news to-night?" "It snows!"

The dog barked; Abner tittered,
But Gran'ther shook his head.
Now mother brought the candles,
And the table soon was spread:

With the dishes on the dresser,
The loaf of wheat and rye,
The baked beans from the oven,
And a royal pumpkin-pie.

"Draw up: we 're ready, Reuben."
"But where did Abner go?"
With Gran'ther's crutch for a musket,
He was marching sad and slow;
Freezing in thought at midnight,
At Valley Forge in the snow!

THE LITTLE DRUMMER.

'TIS of a little drummer
The story I shall tell,
Of how he marched to battle,
And all that there befell;
Out in the West with Lyon
(For once that name was true),
For whom the little drummer beat
His *rat-tat-too.*

Our army rose at midnight,
Ten thousand men as one,
Each slinging on his knapsack
And snatching up his gun;

"*Forward!*" and off they started;
As all good soldiers do,
When the little drummer beats for them
The *rat-tat-too.*

Across a rolling country,
Where the mist began to rise;
Past many a blackened farm-house,
Till the sun was in the skies;
Then we met the rebel pickets,
Who skirmished and withdrew,
While the little drummer beat and beat
The *rat-tat-too.*

Along the wooded hollows
The line of battle ran.
Our centre poured a volley,
And the fight at once began;
For the rebels answered, shouting,
And a shower of bullets flew;
But still the little drummer beat
His *rat-tat-too.*

He stood among his comrades,
As they quickly formed the line,
And when they raised their muskets
He watched the barrels shine.
When the volley broke, he started,
For war to him was new ;
But still the little drummer beat
His *rat-tat-too.*

It was a sight to see them,
That early autumn day,—
Our soldiers in their blue coats,
And the rebel ranks in gray ;
The smoke that rolled between them,
The balls that whistled through,
And the little drummer as he beat
His *rat-tat-too.*

His comrades dropped around him,—
By fives and tens they fell ;
Some pierced by Minie bullets,
Some torn by shot and shell.

They played against our cannon,
And a caisson's splinters flew;
But still the little drummer beat
His *rat-tat-too.*

The right, the left, the centre, —
The fight was everywhere;
They pushed us here, — we wavered;
We drove and broke them there.
The gray-backs fixed their bayonets
And charged the coats of blue,
But still the little drummer beat
His *rat-tat-too.*

"Where is our little drummer?"
His nearest comrades say,
When the dreadful fight is over,
And the smoke is cleared away.
As the rebel corps was scattering
He urged them to pursue, —
So furiously he beat and beat
The *rat-tat-too.*

He stood no more among them;
A bullet, as it sped,
Had glanced and struck his ankle,
And stretched him with the dead.
He crawled behind a cannon,
And pale and paler grew;
But still the little drummer beat
His *rat-tat-too.*

They bore him to the surgeon,
A busy man was he.
"A drummer-boy, what ails him?"
His comrades answered, "See!"
As they took him from the stretcher
A heavy breath he drew,
And his little fingers strove to beat
The *rat-tat-too.*

The ball had spent its fury;
"A scratch," the surgeon said,
As he wound the snowy bandage
Which the lint was staining red!

"I must leave you now, old fellow!"
"O, take me back with you,
For I know the men are missing me,
And the *rat-tat-too!*"

Upon his comrade's shoulder
They lifted him so grand,
With his dusty drum before him
And his drum-sticks in his hand!
To the fiery front of battle,
That nearer, nearer drew,
And evermore he beat and beat
His *rat-tat-too.*

The wounded, as he passed them,
Looked up and gave a cheer;
And one in dying blessed him,
Between a smile and tear!
And the gray-backs — they are flying
Before the coats of blue,
For whom the little drummer beats
His *rat-tat-too.*

When the west was red with sunset,
The last pursuit was o'er;
Brave Lyon rode the foremost,
And looked the name he bore!
And before him, on his saddle,
As a weary child would do,
Sat the little drummer fast asleep,
With his *rat-tat-too.*

WHEN THIS OLD FLAG WAS NEW.

WHEN this old flag was new,
The manners and the men
That are so petty now,
Methinks, were better then.
The straits that we were in,
The work there was to do,
All hearts and hands made strong,
When this old flag was new.

Five long, long years we fought
  Against the British Crown;
For George the Third would put
  His rebel subjects down.
Many were our defeats,
  Our victories were few,
And yet we lost not hope,
  When this old flag was new.

Its hour of triumph came.
  'T was ninety years ago,
When out of Yorktown marched,
  With solemn step and slow,
The beaten English host,
  That cursed, yet dreaded, too,
The sight they saw that day,
  When this old flag was new.

Along the dusty road,
  Drawn up in bright array,
They saw the gallant French,
  Whose bands began to play;

They saw the Yankee troops,
A ragged, motley crew,
Vho looked the men they were
When this old flag was new.

Through these, with shouldered arms
And colors cased, they went;
Low beat their drums the while,
But loud their discontent;
Sullenly on the ground
Their captured guns they threw,
Thinking of England's flag,
When this old flag was new.

The long war left us poor,
But left us strong and free,
What we determined best
Thenceforth to do and be;
To mould the State at will,
Make laws, and break them too,
No master but ourselves,
When this old flag was new.

A brave old race they were
Who peopled then the land,
No man of them ashamed
To show his horny hand;
Hands that had grasped the sword
Now drew the furrow true;
For honored was the plough
When this old flag was new.

The farmer tilled the ground
His father tilled before;
If it supplied his wants,
He asked for nothing more.
Thankful for what he had,
On Sunday, in his pew,
He sang a hymn of praise,
When this old flag was new.

He wore a homespun suit
His wife and daughters made;
'T was dyed with butternuts,
And, likely, old and frayed;

They dressed in calicoes,
And looked right pretty, too;
Women, not clothes, were loved
When this old flag was new.

Men married women then,
Who kept their healthful bloom
By working at the churn
And at the wheel and loom;
Who could their stockings knit,
And darn, and bake, and brew;
A housewife in each house,
When this old flag was new.

And women married men
Who did not shrink from toil,
But wrung with sweat their bread
From out the stubborn soil;
Whose axes felled the wood,
And where so late it grew
Did straightway build their homes,
When this old flag was new.

The school-house and the church
Were raised the selfsame day;
For who would learn to read
Should learn, they thought, to pray.
They read the Bible then,
And all believed it true;
For they were simple folk,
When this old flag was new.

They lived their homely lives
The plain, old-fashioned way;
Thanksgiving once a year,
And general Muster-day;
Town meeting in the spring,—
Their holidays were few
And very gravely kept,
When this old flag was new.

A hardy, patient race,
Their growth was sure, if slow;
Happy in this, they had
A world wherein to grow,

Where kings and priests were not,
Nor peoples to subdue;
A Continent their own,
When this old flag was new.

From where their hearth-fires burned,
And where their dead were laid,
Through woods till then untrod,
That slept in endless shade,
Up mighty streams and lakes,
By many a still bayou,
North, south, they drove their way,
When this old flag was new.

The forests of the North,
Dense, dark with pines, knew well
Beneath whose sturdy blows
Their grand old monarchs fell;
Before whose deadly shots
The wild deer, crashing, flew,
And the great, frightened moose,
When this old flag was new.

The swollen floods of March
Brought down, with thundering spray,
Great logs, that choked the streams,
From clearings far away;
Day after day long rafts,
Each with its stalwart crew,
Like islands came and went,
When this old flag was new.

And all along their way
Huge saw-mills drew them in,
With grating iron teeth
That made a ceaseless din;
And keels were laid, which soon
To goodly vessels grew;
The Forest sought the Sea
When this old flag was new.

Southward, with steady sails,
Along our rugged shore,
Around the dangerous capes
Where stormy billows roar;

Beyond the coral reefs,
To waters calm and blue,
Where shone no flag so proud,
When this old flag was new.

Among the summer isles
That stud the Spanish Main,
Where bloom the orange-groves,
And grows the sugar-cane,
Where Santa Cruz is made,
And other spirits, too, —
The rum our fathers drank,
When this old flag was new.

And northward to the Banks,
Where through the mists they drift,
And thin the schools of cod;
And where the icebergs lift
Their glittering, dreadful peaks,
The polar whale pursue:
No sailors were so bold
When this old flag was new.

And westward evermore,
As if they fled the sea,
Whose waves their brothers ploughed,
Whose islands held in fee
The farmers of the North,
Whose harvests scantier grew,
Went pushing through the woods,
When this old flag was new.

Beside the slow ox-carts,
Which held their household stuff,
Whereon the children sat
When the long roads were rough,
With muskets in their hands,
And pluck to use them, too,
They plodded on and on,
When this old flag was new.

Some broad, bright river's bank
Became their dwelling-place;
They built a house of logs,
And cleared the woods apace;

Planted a patch with corn,
Which soon the sun and dew
Matured in plenteous crops,
When this old flag was new.

And westward, westward still,
They pushed the forests back;
And where they went the flag
Did follow on their track;
For only where it waved,
When near the Indian drew,
Was man or woman safe,
When this old flag was new.

Its stripes of rising day,
Its clustering stars of night, —
They saw them burn afar,
And blessed their growing light;
For lo! as years went by,
Within its sky of blue
Star after star arose,
When this old flag was new!

Hail to the brave old flag!
Wherever it has flown
The State has gone before
And made its greatness known;
It found us torn with war,
It found us weak and few,—
We even had a king
When this old flag was new!

God bless the dear old flag!
The nation's hope and pride,
For which our fathers fought,
For which our children died;
And, long as there shall beat
A heart to freedom true,
Preserve the rights we won
When this old flag was new!

A NEW CHRISTMAS CAROL.

I.

I WALKED the streets on Christmas eve,
Between the darkness and the light;
It was a dull and lonesome night,
The very houses seemed to grieve!

"Two thousand years ago," I said,
"A Child was born at dead of night;
No monarch saw the beauteous sight,
The Child was born where beasts were fed.

"No purple robe inwrapped his limbs,
He was but lapped in swaddling-bands;
No trump was blown about the lands,
Only the angels sang their hymns.

"A single star, a torch of light,
Guided the wise men to the spot;
Few saw the light, and soon forgot
The wandering meteor of the night.

"This little Child, so meanly born,
Was Prince, was King, was King of kings,
The Lord of all created things,
Who came to men, a man forlorn!

"'Good-will on earth, and peace to men,'
His angels sung: he taught the same.
'Good-will and peace,' — what better claim
To be a God was needed then?

"'Good-will and peace!' the godlike words
Are now the jargon of the day:
We mouth them when we preach and pray,
And when we whet our battle swords!"

II.

My thoughts grew sad, and bitter too;
For while I walked the dreary town
The deepening night came darker down,
The moon was hid, and stars were few.

The cold winds blew, and round and round
The sear leaves eddied; trees were bare;
And men moved slowly here and there,
Trailing their shadows on the ground.

"Behold!" I sneered, "the world without,
An emblem of the world within:
The darkness is the night of sin,
And we the fools who grope about.

"How royally we keep his birth,
Who came to-night to save mankind!
Without, dead leaves and frosty wind;
Within, the cold, unlighted hearth.

"It was not thus in days of yore;
In brave and merry England's prime,
Our fathers kept the Christmas time,
The merry Yule that is no more.

"The walls of hall and hut were hung
With ivy and with holly boughs;
And minstrels went from house to house,
And all night long their carols sung.

"The jolly dancers shook the floor
With country reels, which fiddlers played,
And many a little man and maid
At blind-man's-buff and battledoor.

"Peopled the corners with delight;
The old folks sat at fox-and-goose,
And let their tongues and fancies loose
In tales of lords and ladies bright.

"And then the world of solid cheer
In meats and drinks, for rich and poor; —
The meanest kept an open door,
For Christmas came but once a year.

"Turkeys and capons roasted brown,
Dishes of brawn, boar's heads, and, chief,
The never-failing loin of beef,
With jugs of ale to wash it down.

"They feast until the tapers shine,
And day is dead, and curfews toll;
At last they take the wassail-bowl,
And drain the spiced and sugared wine!

"The merry Christmas days are past,
The antique plenty is no more;
We feast alone, we bar the door,
We make our blinds and windows fast.

"This very night, when Christ was born,
And when, if ever, men should be
Touched with the sweetest sympathy
For all the needy and forlorn,

"The streets are full of want and woe,
Of hollow cheeks and haggard eyes;
Even now, perchance, some beggar dies
Of famine, in the falling snow!"

III.

The stars were gone, the sky was low,
The roof of night had settled down;
It crushed the melancholy town
Until it crumbled into snow.

I drew my cloak about my breast,
And plodded on, I knew not where,
In sickly sorrow and despair,
Breathing a silent prayer for rest.

I thought of all my bygone years,
Of what I was, and might have been;
The calm without, the strife within
Until my eyes were dim with tears.

"'T is not for me," I said, "to sneer
At others for the sins I see;
My own should hush and humble me, —
Behold! the sinner, Lord, is here!

"I have no mission to mankind;
It tasks the wisest and the best
To rule the world within his breast,
The wayward heart, the wandering mind.

"God rules the world, and moulds at will
Its tribes of men, and moulds to good;
The evil Past, when understood,
Is good, the Present better still."

IV.

My heart grew lighter as the night
Wore on; the winds had ceased to blow,
The withered leaves were laid in snow,
And all the long dark streets were white.

I saw the young, I saw the fair,
Where window squares were touched with flame;

Through opening doors their laughter came,
And mellow music charmed the air.

"The past," I said, "is dead and cold,
And better so; 't is wrong to grieve;
I would not change this Christmas eve
For all the merry Yules of old.

"The Yule log and the wassail-bowl,
The mistletoe, may pass away;
We keep a better holiday,
The perfect Christmas of the soul!

"I celebrate thy birth to-night,
Here in the darkness and the snow,
And thou art with me as I go,
Dear Christ! a presence and a light.

"Thy mission was a double one,
For God, and man; with thee began
The law of God, the law of man,
The sovereign Will that will be done.

"Before thou cam'st the world was blind,
For what was false, or what was true,

They did but guess, they never knew;
Thou wert the Saviour of mankind.

"Thou wert the truth ordained above
To slay the falsehoods of the past,
The fraud of priests, the crime of caste,
And usher in the reign of love.

"The rights of man began with thee,
Incarnate Love! For where love reigns
Farewell to servitude and chains;
The law of Christ is liberty.

"And Liberty her dwelling-place
Hath made with us; and I can see
The vast Republics yet to be,
The freedom of the human race!"

The stars were out, the moon was bright,
For now the sky was clear of snow;
No cloud above, no stain below,
It was a pure and blessed night.

The quiet of the earth and skies
Had settled on my troubled heart;
I seemed to walk with Christ apart,
I walked the streets of Paradise!

THE WINE-CUP.

LYCIUS, the Cretan prince, of race divine,
Like many a royal youth, was fond of wine;
So, when his father died and left him king,
He spent his days and nights in revelling.
Show him a wine-cup, he would soon lay down
His sceptre, and for roses change his crown, —
Neglectful of his people and his state,
The noble cares that make a monarch great.

One day in summer, — so the story goes, —
Among his seeming friends, but secret foes,
He sat, and drained the wine-cup, when there came
A gray-haired man, and called him by his name,
"Lycius!" It was his tutor, Philocles,
Who held him when a child upon his knees.
"Lycius," the old man said, "it suits not you
To waste your life among this drunken crew.
Bethink you of your sire, and how he died
For that bright sceptre lying by your side,

And of the blood your loving people shed
To keep that golden circlet on your head.
Ah! how have you repaid them?" "Philocles,"
The Prince replied, "what idle words are these?
I loved my father, and I mourned his fate;
But death must come to all men, soon or late.
Could we recall our dear ones from their urn,
Just as they lived and loved, 't were well to mourn;
But since we cannot, let us smile instead:
I hold the living better than the dead.
My father reigned and died: I live and reign.
As for my people, why should they complain?
Have I not ended all their deadly wars,
Bound up their wounds, and honored their old scars?
They bleed no more; enough for me, and mine,
The blood o' th' grape, — the ripe, the royal wine!
Slaves, fill my cup again!" They filled, and crowned
His brow with roses, but the old man frowned.
"Lycius," he said once more, "the State demands
Something besides the wine-cup in your hands;

Resume your crown and septre, be not blind:
Kings live not for themselves, but for mankind."

"Good Philocles," the Prince, ashamed, replied,
His soft eye lighting with a flash of pride,
"Your wisdom has forgotten one small thing,—
I am no more your pupil but your king.
Kings are in place of gods; remember, then,
They answer to the gods, and not to men."
"Hear, then, the gods, who speak to-day, through me,
The sad but certain words of prophecy:
'Touch not the cup; small sins in kings are great;
Be wise in time, nor further tempt your fate.'"

"Old man! there is no Fate, save that which lies
In our own hands that shape our destinies:
It is a dream. If I should will and do
A deed of ill, no good could thence ensue;
And, willing goodness, shall not goodness be
Sovereign, like ill, to save herself, and me?
I laugh at Fate." The wise man shook his head.
"Remember what the oracles have said:

'What most he loves, who rules this Cretan land,
Shall perish by the wine-cup in his hand.'"
"Prophet of ill! no more, or you shall die!
See how my deeds shall give your words the lie,
And baffle Fate, and all who hate me — so!"
Sheer through the casement, in the court below,
He dashed the half-drained goblet in disdain,
That scattered, as it flew, a bloody rain.
His courtiers laughed. But now a woman's shriek
Rose terrible without, and blanched his cheek.
He hurried to the casement in a fright,
And lo! his eyes were blasted with a sight
Too pitiful to think of, — death was there,
And wringing hands, and madness, and despair!
There stood a nurse, and on her bosom lay
A dying child, whose life-blood streamed away,
Reddening its robe like wine! It was his own,
His son, — the prince that should have filled the throne
When he was dead, and ruled the Cretan land,
Slain by the wine-cup from his father's hand!

THE KING'S SENTINEL.

UPON a time, unbidden, came a man
Before the mighty king of Teberistan.
When the king saw this daring man, he cried,
"Who art thou, fellow?" Whereto he replied,
"A lion-hunter and a swordsman, I;
Moreover, I am skilled in archery:
A famous bowman, who of men alone
Can drive his arrows through the hardest stone.
Besides my courage, tried in desperate wars,
I know to read the riddle of the stars.
First in the service of Emeer Khojend,
Who, friend to none, has none to be his friend,—
Him have I left, I hope, an honest man,
To serve, if so he wills, the Lord of Teberistan."
To whom in answer: "I have men enow,
Stalwart like thee, apt with the sword and bow;
These no king lacks, or need to: what we need
Are men who may be trusted,—word and deed;

Who, to keep pain from us, would yield their
breath,
Faithful in life, and faithfuller in death."
"Try me." As thrice the monarch claps his
hands,
The Captain of the Guard before him stands,
Amazed that one, unknown of him, had come
In to the king, and fearful of his doom.
Sternly his lord: "You guard me, slave, so well
That I have made this man my sentinel."
Thus did the happy archer gain his end,
And thus his sovereign find at last a friend,
Who from that hour was to his service bound,
Keen as his hawk, and faithful as his hound.

Now when a moon of nights had ta'en its flight,
Amid the darkness of a summer night,
The king awoke, alarmed, with fluttering breath,
Like one who struggles in the toils of death,
And wandered to his lattice, which stood wide,
Whence, down below him in the court, he spied
A shadowy figure with a threatening spear.
"What man art thou? — if man — and wherefore
here?"

"Your sentinel, and servant, O my lord!"
"Hearken!" They did. And now a voice was heard,
But whether from the desert far away,
Or from the neighbor-garden, who could say?
So far it was, yet near, so loud, yet low;
"Who calls?" it said. It sighed, "*I go! I go!*"
Then spake the pallid king, in trouble sore,
"Have you this dreadful summons heard before?"
"That voice, or something like it, have I heard
(Perchance the wailing of some magic bird)
Three nights, and at this very hour, O king!
But could not quit my post to seek the thing.
But now, if you command me, I will try,
Where the sound was, to find the mystery."
"Go! follow where it leads, if anywhere,
And what it is, and means, to me declare.
It may be ill, but I will hope the best:
But haste, for I am weary, and must rest."
Softly, as one that would surprise a thief,
Who might detect the rustling of a leaf,
The sentinel stole out into the night,
Nor knew that the king kept him still in sight,—

Behind him, with a blanket o'er his head,
Black-draped down to his feet, as he were dead;
But the spear trembled in his hands, his knees
Weakened; at length he sank beneath the trees.
Again the voice was heard, and now more near
Than when it faded last, — it was so clear:
"*I go! What man will force me to return?*"
"Now," thought the wondering soldier, "I shall learn
Who speaks, and why." And, looking up, he saw
What filled his simple soul with love and awe, —
A noble woman standing by his side,
Who might have been the widow or the bride
Of some great king, so much of joy and woe
Hung on the perfect lips that breathed, "I go,"
Shone in the wondering eyes, dimmed the bright hair, —
No woman, born of woman, half so fair!
"Most beautiful! who art thou?" "Know, O man,
I am his life, who rules in Teberistan, —
The spirit of your lord, whose end is nigh,
Except some friend — what friend? — for him will die."

"Can I?" But she: "'T is written you must live."
"What, then, — my life rejected, — can I give?"
"You have a son," she whispered in his ear,
Feeling her way, it seemed, in hope and fear,
Lest what she would demand should be denied.
He pressed a sudden hand against his side
Where his heart ached, but spake not. "Fetch your son,
And I remain; refuse, and I am gone
Even while we parley." Stifling the great sigh
That heaved his breast, he answered, "He shall die."
And now for the first time he was aware
Besides themselves there was a Presence there,
Which made his blood run cold, but did not shake
His resolution that, for the king's sake,
His boy must perish. So he said, "I go,"
And like the swiftest arrow from his bow
The phantom vanished, and he went to bring
His sleeping child as ransom for the king,
Leaving that strange, bright woman there alone;
Who, smiling sadly, soon as he was gone,
Ran to her lord, fallen upon the ground;
And while she lifted his dead weight, and wound

Her arms around him, and her tears did rain,
Kissed his cold lips, till, warmed, they kissed her own again!

Meanwhile the sentinel down the royal park
Groped his way homeward, stumbling in the dark,
Uncertain of himself and all about;
For the low branches were as hands thrust out, —
But whether to urge faster, or delay,
Since they both clutched and pushed, he could not say;
Nor, so irregular his heart's wild beat,
Whether he ran, or dragged his lagging feet!
When, half a league being over, he was near
His poor, mean hut, there broke upon his ear, —
As from a child who wakes in dreams of pain,
And, while its parents listen, sleeps again, —
A cry like *Father!* Whence, and whose, the cry?
Was it from out the hut, or in the sky?
What if some robber with the boy had fled?
What — dreadful thought! — what if the boy were dead?
He reached the door in haste, and found it barred,
As when at set of sun he went on guard,

Shutting the lad in from all nightly harms,
As safe as in the loving mother arms
Which could no longer fold him: all was fast, —
No footstep since his own that night had passed
Across the threshold, — no man had been there;
'T was still within, and cold, and dark, and bare; —
Bare, but not dark; for, opening now the door,
The fitful moon, late hidden, out once more
Thrust its sharp crescent through the starless gloom
Like a long cimeter, and smote the room
With pitiless brightness, and himself with dread, —
Poor, childless man! — for there his child was dead!
He spake not, wept not, stirred not; one might say,
Till that first awful moment passed away,
He was not, but some dead man in his place
Stood, with a deathless sorrow in its face!
Then — for a heart so stricken as was his,
So suddenly set upon by agonies,
Must find as sudden a relief, or break —
He wept a little for his own sad sake,

And for the boy that lay there without breath,
Whom he so freely sacrificed to Death!
Thereafter kneeling softly by the bed,
Face buried, and hands wrung above his head,
He said what prayer came to him; and be sure
The prayers of all men at such times are pure.
At last he rose, and lifting to his heart
Its precious burden — limbs that dropped apart —
Hands that no longer clasped him — little feet
That nevermore would run his own to meet, —
Wrapping his cloak round all with loving care,
To shield it from the dew and the cold air,
He staggered slowly out in the black night.
Nowhere was that strange woman now in sight
To take the child; but at the palace gate
The king stood waiting him, — reprieved of Fate!
"What was it, soldier?" "God preserve the king! —
'T was nothing." "Tell me, quickly." "A small thing,
Not worth your hearing. In the park I found
A lonely woman sitting on the ground,
Wailing her husband, who had done her wrong,

Whose house she had forsaken, — but not long;
For I made peace between them, — dried the tears,
And added some, I hope, to their now happy years."
"What bear you there?" "A child I was to bring —"
He paused a moment — "It is mine, O king!"
"I followed, and know all. So young to die —
Poor thing! — for me! . . . . You should be king, not I.
You shall be my Vizier, — shake not your head;
I swear it shall be so. Be comforted.
For this dead child of yours, who met my doom,
I will have built for him a costly tomb
Of divers marbles, glorious to behold,
With many a rich device inlaid of gold,
Ivory, and precious stones, and thereupon
Blazoned the name and story of your son,
And yours, Vizier, of whom shall history tell
That never King but one had such a Sentinel!"

THE BALLAD OF CRECY.

WHAT man-at-arms, or knight
Of doughty deeds in fight, —
What king whose dauntless might
Still lives in story,
Deserves such fame as one
Who, when his sight was gone,
Fought till he fell, — King John,
Bohemia's glory?

That fatal August day
The French and English lay
Drawn up in dread array,
With bows and lances,
Determined then to try
Which host could bravest die,
Which host would soonest fly,
England's or France's.

The morning light revealed
On Crecy's famous field,
Armed with his spear and shield,
This fearless foeman,
Who, with his old blind eyes,
Will for his French allies
Do battle till he dies, —
And fly from no man!

His bridle rein he tied
To a good knight's at his side,
Among the French to ride,
That saw astounded
Who with their foremost prest,
His shield before his breast,
His long spear set in rest, —
The trumpet sounded!

Full tilt against their foes,
Where thickest fell the blows,
And war-cries mingling rose,
"*St. George!*" "*St. Denys!*"

Driven by the trumpet's blare
Where most the English dare,
And where the French despair, —
He there and then is!

Up, down, he rode, and thrust;
Unhorsed, knights rolled in the dust;
Whom he encounters must
Go down or fly him:
All round the bloody field
Spears rattle on his shield,
But none can make him yield;
Few venture nigh him

Here, there, he rides until
His horse perforce stands still:
He spurs it, but it will
No longer mind him;
It cannot stir for fright,
So desperate now the fight,
Death on the left, the right,
Before, behind him!

But this, so blind was he,
The old king could not see;
An he had seen, pardie!
His soul delighting
Had faster rained down blows
Upon his puny foes,
And in the dark death-throes
Had gone out fighting!

When the last rout was done,
And when the English won,
They found the brave King John,
Who fought so lately,
Stone dead, — his old blind eyes
Uplooking to the skies,
As he again would rise
And battle greatly!

They bore him to his rest,
His shield upon his breast,
Where blazoned was his crest, —
Three ostrich feathers;

Under, in gold, was seen
The royal words, "Ich Dien,"
Which most kings now think mean,—
Save in foul weathers!

Not so the Black Prince thought,
Who then at Crecy fought,
And old John's valor caught,
And was victorious.
"Who serve like him," quoth he,
"Commend themselves to me;
Such royal servants be
Forever glorious!"

ROME.

"Roma, Roma, Roma!
Non è più come era prima."

STILL the city stands:
Fallen away
From its old renown, —
The wonder and the terror of the Lands!
Temple and tower gone down —
Nothing left to fall
But weeds upon the wall;
All decay —
Utterly desolate!
Haunted by the ghost of its dead state,
Memory of its men who ruled like gods,
Memory of the gods who ruled its men,
Dreaming in despair of what was then, —
Flamens, augurs, lictors with their rods, —
Legions on their marches
Through triumphal arches, —
Cæsar in his car
With the spoils of war, —

From Carthage, from Egypt, from all the realms
afar,
And, drooping in his train,
Proud kings overthrown,
Their sceptres now his own,
And palest queens discrowned, superb in their
disdain
Of Cæsar marching home
Victorious to Rome!
Who on her Seven Hills
Sits, Mistress of the World
Which she with carnage fills;
Hated of men, but to the gods austere
Dear,
For does not mightiest Jove protect, defend?
And his eagle send
To perch upon her standards? Look above,
There where his million altar-smokes are curled, —
The Capitolian Jove!
And Mars — Mars,
He of the shield and spear, —
The stern, the cruel, the Invincible,
Whose only thought is *kill!*

How dear
To him and his this Rome of never-ending wars!
— Hidden in the secret shrine,
(Stately Juno, come not here,
Chaste Diana, disappear, —
These are none of thine!)
Where they wreathe the roses,
Where they pour the wine, —
Who on that couch reposes,
With arms that twine and twine?
— Venus Aphrodite,
Goddess of the Sea, —
She is the most mighty,
And the sweetest, she!
Venus! Venus! Venus!
Thou alone of all the Powers
Dost from sorrow screen us,
Thy power alone in all the hours
Lets nothing come between us,
Who adore thee, Venus! —
Nothing part
Heart from heart
In thy bliss of blisses, —
But our delaying kisses!

— Horror! — Who are these?
Shapes, or shadows rather,
Which like the night do gather —
From where? for what? To seize!
The Fates! The Fates!
— The Hun is at the gates!

Still the city stands!
Fallen away
From its old renown —
The wonder and the terror of the Lands!
Temple and tower gone down —
Nothing left to fall
But weeds upon the wall;
All decay —
Utterly desolate!

CÆSAR.

"Render, therefore, unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's."

I.

CÆSAR is fallen! Shout!
Shout that his sword is broken, lost his crown!
Shout that his braggart hosts are put to rout!
His empire has gone down!
Exult as wildly as ye would have wailed
If Cæsar had prevailed!
That yesterday you feared him,
Whom you to-day despise,
Forget, deny;
But be no more deceived by kingly lies,
For what he was to all your kings endeared him,
As what they are finds favor in your eyes.
Ah! why, why
For such as these, and he, will ye still live and die?

II.

Be just — just!
What has he done your rulers would not do?
What do they care for you,
Ye peoples, who in princes put your trust?
What has he done, I say, they have not done?
Made blood like water run
In the dense streets his dreadful cannon swept,
Where France above her slaughtered children wept?
It is a way they have who wear the crown:
Your good king shot his loving subjects down;
But, though submissive, brave,
They gathered up their dead,
And, while they bore them to their honored grave,
Compelled him to look on with white, uncovered head!
— If this, our Cæsar, strode through guilt to power,
If in the blood he spilt he built his throne,
He did not stand alone,

For France was with him in that desperate hour;
For, though she might not welcome the strong hand
That steered her suddenly from the dangerous shore,
Whereon, full driven, she had been wrecked before,
And brought her safe to land,
She let the helm within his hand remain;
For rent by furious factions,
And weary of distractions,
She wanted peace again —
Demanded peace, the wealth that she had lost,
And her old greatness, at whatever cost.
— Remember what he found her,
And what she was when her first Cæsar fell,
With Europe armed around her,
And none to wish her well!
How with their bayonets dripping with her blood,
Its kings brought back the kings who had oppressed her,
But never once redressed her, —
And all pronounced it good!

— Too weak, they felt, to chain
Her giant limbs again,
That with the world had wrestled, and might yet; —
They drugged her till she slept,
And then upon her crept,
And o'er her cast a net.
She struggled, but in vain;
But she did not forget.
— And he did not forget!
And when, a stormy wooer,
That would no longer sue her,
He leaped into her arms,
It was that he might free her,
And that the world might see her
In her recovered charms, —
No trace of tears, no fear of tribulations,
Most beautiful, and all-powerful, — the queen of all the nations!
— This her Cæsar made her,
And this at last betrayed her;
For this has brought upon her the conquering Invader!

III.

Cæsar is fallen! Shout!
Shout till your throats are hoarse, and stunned your ears;
Fire your loud cannon, hang your banners out;
But leave me to my tears!
Not o'er this fallen Cæsar do I weep,
Nor for the thousands whom to death he led,
Nor for your thousands in the same dark sleep,—
I weep not for the dead!
I weep for the unutterable blindness
That makes a Cæsar possible to-day,
That will not let the nations live in kindness,
And die the natural way!
— What though ye have one Cæsar overthrown?
Ye have set up another of your own.
What is it, pray, to us?
What is it to the Race
Whether the Gaul or Pruss,
The Latin or the Russ,
Is now in Cæsar's place?
It matters not a jot,—
They love us — love us not!

They trust us, when they must;
They use us, when they will;
They grind us to the dust;
They cheat, they rob, they kill!
Exult who may. For me, I must deplore, —
I must lament, and pray
That God will bring the day
When Cæsar is no more!

MARE VICTUM.

I.

WHAT would they think of this, the men of old,
Against whose little world its waters rolled,
Immeasurable, pitiless as Fate,
A thing to fear and hate?
Age after age they saw it flow, and flow,
Lifting the weeds, and laying bare the sands;
Whence did it come, and whither did it go?
To what far isles, what undiscovered lands?

Who knoweth? None can say, for none has crossed
That unknown sea; no sail has ventured there,
Save what the storms have driven, and those are lost,
And none have come — from where?
Beyond the straits where those great pillars stand
Of Hercules, there is no solid land;
Only the fabled Islands of the Blest,
That slumber somewhere in the golden West;
The Fortunate Isles, where falls no winter snow,
But where the palm-trees wave in endless spring,
And the birds sing,
And balmy west winds blow!
Beyond this bright Elysium all is sea;
A plain of foam that stretches on and on,
Beyond the clouds, beyond the setting sun,
Endless and desolate as Eternity!
At last, from out the wild and stormy north —
Or is it but a dream? — a bark puts forth
Into that unknown sea. It nears me now;
I see its flapping sails, its dragon prow,

Its daring men ; I know the arms they bear ;
I know those shaggy Jarls with lengths of yellow hair !
They go and come no more.
Still lies the sea as awful as before !
Who shall explore its bounds, if bounds there be ?
Who shall make known to Man the secret of the Sea ?
The Genoese ! His little fleet departs,
Steered by the prospering pilot of the wind.
The sailors crowd the stern with troubled hearts,
Watching their homes that slowly drop behind ;
His looms before, for by the prow he stands,
And sees in his rapt thoughts the undiscovered lands !
All day they sail ; the sun goes down at night
Below the waves, and land is still afar ;
The sluggish sailors sleep, but see, his light
As steady as a star !
He pores upon his chart with sleepless eyes,
Till day returns and walks the gloomy skies.

In vain the sullen sailors climb the shrouds,
And strain their eyes upon the giddy mast;
They see the sky, the sun, the anchored clouds —
The only Land is passed!
Day follows day, night, night; and sea and sky
Still yawn beyond, and fear to fear succeeds.
At last a knot of weeds goes drifting by,
And then a sea of weeds!
The winds are faint with spice, the skies are bland
And filled with singing birds, and some alight,
And cheer the sailors with their news of land,
Until they fly at night.
At last they see a light!
The keen-eyed Admiral sees it from his bark,
A little dancing flame that flickers through the dark!
They bed their rusty anchors in the sand,
And all night long they lie before the land,
And watch and pray for day!
When morning lifts the mist, a league away,

Like some long cloud on Ocean's glittering floor,
It takes the rising sun — a wooded shore,
With many a glassy bay!
The first great footstep in that new-found world
Is his, who plucked it from the greedy main,
And his the earliest kiss, the holiest prayer;
He draws his sword, his standard is unfurled,
And while it lifts its wedded crowns in air
He plants the cross, and gives his world to Heaven and Spain!
His silver furrow faded in the sea,
But thousands followed to the lands he won:
They grew as native to the waves, as free
As sea-birds in the sun!
Their white sails glanced in every bay and stream!
They climbed the hills, they tracked the pathless woods,
And towns and cities o'er the solitudes
Rose, as in a dream!
The happy Worlds exchanged their riches then;
The New sent forth her tributes to the Old,

In galleons full of gold,
And she repaid with men!
Thus did the grand old sailor wrest the key
From Nature's grasp, unlocking all the Past,
And thus was won at last
A victory o'er the sea!

II.

The victory of To-day
Completes what he began,
Along the dark and barren watery way,
And in the Mind of Man!
He did but find a world of land, but we
What worlds of thought in land, and air, and sea!
Beside our ships, whose masts o'ertop the trees
On windy hills, whose hulls are palaces,
His crazy caravels
Were little seashore shells!
His weary months of wandering seem a dream;
For, sped by our broad sails and flashing wheels

We shorten the long leagues with sliding keels,
And turn the months to days, and make the sea a stream!
The worlds are nearer now, but still too far;
They must be nearer still! To Saxon men,
Who dare to think, and use the tongue or pen,
What can be long a bar?
We rob the Lightning of its deadly fires,
And make it bear our words along the wires
That run from land to land. Why should we be
Divided by the Sea?
It shall no longer be! A chain shall run
Below the stormy waves, and bind the worlds in one!
Across the under-world of rocks and sands,
Across the buried lands;
Through wastes of seaweed, tangled in their slime;
Through forests, vaster than the land has known;
And over chasms where earthquakes were o'erthrown
Before the Birth of Time!

'Tis done!
The Worlds are One!
And lo! the chain that binds them binds the Race
That dwells on either shore;
By Space and Time no more
Divided, for to-day there is no Time or Space!
We speak, — the Lightnings flee,
Flashing the Thoughts of Man across the Conquered Sea!

III.

Ring, jubilant bells! ring out a merry chime
From every tower and steeple in the land,
Triumphant music for the march of Time,
The better days at hand!
And you, ye cannon, through your iron lips,
That guard the dubious peace of warlike Powers,
Thunder abroad this victory of ours
From all your forts and ships!
We need your noisy voices to proclaim
The Nation's joy to-day from shore to shore;

The grim protection of your deathful flame
We hope to need no more;
For, save our English brothers, who dare be
Our foes, or rivals, on the land or sea?
Nor dare *We* fight again, as in the Past;
For, now that We are One, contention ends;
We are, We *must* be friends;
This victory is the last!

ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

A HORATIAN ODE.

NOT as when some great captain falls
In battle, where his country calls,
Beyond the struggling lines
That push his dread designs

To doom, by some stray ball struck dead:
Or, in the last charge, at the head
Of his determined men,
Who *must* be victors then!

Nor as when sink the civic great,
The safer pillars of the State,
Whose calm, mature, wise words
Suppress the need of swords! —

With no such tears as e'er were shed
Above the noblest of our dead
Do we to-day deplore
The Man that is no more!

Our sorrow hath a wider scope,
Too strange for fear, too vast for hope, —
A wonder, blind and dumb,
That waits — what is to come!

Not more astounded had we been
If Madness, that dark night, unseen,
Had in our chambers crept,
And murdered while we slept!

We woke to find a mourning earth, —
Our lares shivered on the hearth, —
The roof-tree fallen, — all
That could affright, appall!

Such thunderbolts, in other lands,
Have smitten the rod from royal hands,
But spared, with us, till now,
Each laurelled Cæsar's brow!

No Cæsar he whom we lament,
A Man without a precedent,
Sent, it would seem, to do
His work, — and perish too!

Not by the weary cares of State,
The endless tasks, which will not wait,
Which, often done in vain,
Must yet be done again:

Not in the dark, wild tide of war,
Which rose so high, and rolled so far,
Sweeping from sea to sea
In awful anarchy: —

Four fateful years of mortal strife,
Which slowly drained the nation's life,
(Yet for each drop that ran
There sprang an armed man!)

Not then; but when, by measures meet, —
By victory and by defeat,
By courage, patience, skill, —
The people's fixed "*We will!*"

Had pierced, had crushed Rebellion dead, —
Without a hand, without a head, —
At last, when all was well,
He fell, — O, *how* he fell!

The time, — the place, — the stealing shape, —
The coward shot, — the swift escape, —
The wife, — the widow's scream,
It is a hideous dream!

A dream? what means this pageant, then?
These multitudes of solemn men,
Who speak not when they meet,
But throng the silent street?

The flags half mast, that late so high
Flaunted at each new victory?
(The stars no brightness shed,
But bloody looks the red!)

The black festoons that stretch for miles,
And turn the streets to funeral aisles?
(No house too poor to show
The nation's badge of woe!)

The cannon's sudden, sullen boom,—
The bells that toll of death and doom,—
The rolling of the drums,—
The dreadful car that comes?

Cursed be the hand that fired the shot,
The frenzied brain that hatched the plot!
Thy country's Father slain
By thee, thou worse than Cain!

Tyrants have fallen by such as thou,
And good hath followed,—may it now!
(God lets bad instruments
Produce the best events.)

But he, the man we mourn to-day,
No tyrant was: so mild a sway
In one such weight who bore
Was never known before!

Cool should he be, of balanced powers,
The ruler of a race like ours,
Impatient, headstrong, wild, —
The man to guide the child!

And this *he* was, who most unfit
(So hard the sense of God to hit!)
Did seem to fill his place.
With such a homely face, —

Such rustic manners, — speech uncouth, —
(That somehow blundered out the truth!)
Untried, untrained to bear
The more than kingly care!

Ay! And his genius put to scorn
The proudest in the purple born,
Whose wisdom never grew
To what, untaught, he knew, —

The people, of whom he was one.
No gentleman, like Washington, —
(Whose bones, methinks, make room,
To have him in their tomb!)

A laboring man, with horny hands,
Who swung the axe, who tilled his lands,
Who shrank from nothing new,
But did as poor men do!

One of the people! Born to be
Their curious epitome;
To share, yet rise above
Their shifting hate and love.

Common his mind (it seemed so then),
His thoughts the thoughts of other men:
Plain were his words, and poor, —
But now they will endure!

No hasty fool, of stubborn will,
But prudent, cautious, pliant still;
Who, since his work was good,
Would do it as he could.

Doubting, was not ashamed to doubt,
And, lacking prescience, went without:
Often appeared to halt,
And was, of course, at fault;

Heard all opinions, nothing loath,
And, loving both sides, angered both:
Was — *not* like Justice, blind,
But watchful, clement, kind.

No hero this of Roman mould;
Nor like our stately sires of old:
Perhaps he was not great, —
But he preserved the State!

O honest face, which all men knew!
O tender heart, but known to few!
O wonder of the age,
Cut off by tragic rage!

Peace! Let the long procession come,
For hark! — the mournful, muffled drum, —
The trumpet's wail afar, —
And see! the awful car!

Peace! Let the sad procession go,
While cannon boom and bells toll slow;
And go, thou sacred car,
Bearing our woe afar!

Go, darkly borne, from State to State,
Whose loyal, sorrowing cities wait
To honor all they can
The dust of that good man!

Go, grandly borne, with such a train
As greatest kings might die to gain;
The just, the wise, the brave,
Attend thee to the grave!

And you, the soldiers of our wars,
Bronzed veterans, grim with noble scars,
Salute him once again,
Your late commander — slain!.

Yes, let your tears indignant fall,
But leave your muskets on the wall;
Your country needs you now
Beside the forge, the plough!

(When Justice shall unsheathe her brand, —
If Mercy may not stay her hand,
Nor would we have it so, —
She must direct the blow!)

And you, amid the master-race,
Who seem so strangely out of place,
Know ye who cometh? He
Who hath declared ye free!

Bow while the body passes, — nay,
Fall on your knees, and weep, and pray!
Weep, weep — I would ye might —
Your poor black faces white!

And, children, you must come in bands,
With garlands in your little hands,
Of blue and white and red,
To strew before the dead!

So sweetly, sadly, sternly goes
The Fallen to his last repose.
Beneath no mighty dome,
But in his modest home;

The churchyard where his children rest,
The quiet spot that suits him best, —
There shall his grave be made,
And there his bones be laid!

And there his countrymen shall come,
With memory proud, with pity dumb,
And strangers far and near,
For many and many a year!

For many a year and many an age,
While History on her ample page
The virtues shall enroll
Of that paternal soul!

THE CHILDREN OF ISIS.

TYPHON and Osiris
Children were of Isis,
Brothers and gods, twin-born, the rulers of her land,
Which prospered, nothing loath,
Under both,
For each the sceptre held with equal hand.

Now Typhon and Osiris
With their great mother Isis
Dwelt: in the cities one, and one in the broad plains
Whereon a subject race,
Dusk of face,
Was bondsman unto him in ancient chains.

Said Typhon once to Isis:
"This brother mine, Osiris,
Does wrong to keep this people so long beneath his yoke.
They fetch him corn and oil,
For him they toil,
While idle all the year he sits." So Typhon spoke.

To Typhon then spake Isis:
"My son he is, Osiris,
As thou my son, — both loved, but neither less nor more.
If his these bondsmen born,
Their oil and corn, —
Who built your palaces that line the shore?

"If not the tribe," said Isis,
"That labors for Osiris,
Barbaric, — a much better, as nearer Us than these.
All day they turn your wheels,
And your proud keels
They lay, and plough for you the dangerous seas!

"Typhon and Osiris!"
Said the sad goddess Isis,
"Children of mine, unnatural, unwise as men, no more!
Let each still fill his throne,
And rule his own:
There must be peace between you as before."

To Typhon and Osiris
The solemn voice of Isis
Was as a wind unheeded, — no sooner come than gone!
Speaking their own rash words,
They drew their swords,
And, calling each his millions, led them on.

"O Typhon! O Osiris!"
Cried out their mother Isis;
But neither heard her warning, for each with desperate hand
Struck at the other's heart,—
No one could part;
So war and waste and want were in the land.

In all the years of Isis
And Typhon and Osiris,
Never such dreadful battle, such courage, such despair;
Brothers with brothers fighting,
In blood delighting,—
Razed cities, temples sacked, death everywhere!

So Typhon and Osiris
Before the troubled Isis
Fought four dark years together, each bloodier than the last;
Till stronger Typhon's swords
And cunning words
Prevailed, and pale Osiris fell aghast!

Then Typhon slew Osiris
Before the weeping Isis,
And after he was dead by night the body stole;
Whereat who followed him
Limb from limb
Dismembered, — hoping so to slay the soul.

Thus Typhon rent Osiris,
To the great grief of Isis,
And thus his mangled body was scattered through the land:
One had his crowned head,
And one instead
His swordless hand, — but rings were on the hand!

So Typhon hid Osiris
Away from sorrowing Isis,
Who straight began her journeys, — North, South, and East, and West.
O mother most undone!
Where is thy son?
Where the dead one whose tomb is in thy breast?

Up and down went Isis
Where Typhon and Osiris
Had dwelt before their trouble, — the cities and the plains;
But in no pyramid
His bones were hid,
Nor where his bondsmen wept, without their chains!

To and fro went Isis
To find the dead Osiris,
Along her one great river, and over all the land.
She could not find his head,
Nor crown instead,
His hand, nor the rich rings were on his hand!

The spirit of Osiris
Came in a dream to Isis,
Saying, "O mighty goddess! why is your heart so sore?
Why do you weep so, mother?
Because my brother,
Typhon, has hid my body? Weep no more.

"Immortal mother, Isis,
I am thy son Osiris,
Twin-born, — the king with Typhon, who rules
the land alone.
His men have statues made
Where I am laid, —
A piece of me in each, — one by his throne."

She woke, the wiser Isis,
To seek and find Osiris,
And found, as he had promised, the idols tall and
grim, —
His shape in every place, —
With Typhon's face!
But was Osiris there? — A piece of him.

After her dear Osiris
The stern and wrathful Isis
Before the men of Typhon, who trembled at
her ire,
Strode up and down the lands;
With her strong hands
Their idols brake, and cast them in the fire!

And now his mother, Isis,
The limbs of lost Osiris
Found, — in every statue of him some precious part;
His head by Typhon's throne;
Beneath a stone
His hand; elsewhere, and last of all, his heart!

The body of Osiris
His goddess-mother, Isis,
Laid reverent on her altar, and bowed her sacred head;
Prayed to some Power unknown, —
Some awful Throne, —
Then rose and kissed the cold lips of her dead.

The soul of great Osiris
Came back again to Isis;
The mouth with breath is warm, and dares to touch her own;
He stretches out his hands;
He stands — stands!
He is himself once more and on his throne.

"Eternal mother Isis,"
Began the god Osiris,
"Where is my brother Typhon?" And Typhon,
"I am here."
He wept, — "O brother! brother!
O mother! mother!"
And Isis wept, — Osiris not a tear!

"Typhon," said Osiris,
"And thou, our mother Isis,
What was the wrong among us? — but righted if it be,
(It must be,) name it not, —
It is forgot
By Typhon and Osiris, and, mightiest Isis, thee!"

"Why stand ye gazing up into heaven?"
Acts i. 11.

WHY stand ye gazing into heaven?
What seek ye there? what hope to find
Besides the clouds, which the cold wind
Drives round the world from morn to even?
The wan moon, ploughed with ancient scars?
The gracious sun, the alien stars,
The all-embracing Space?
Ye look for God?
Have ye beheld him there?
You, or your fathers in their prime?
Or any man, at any time,—
The wise, the good, the fair?
Who has beheld — I will not say his face,
But where his feet have trod?
What have your straining eyes
Discovered in the skies?
Why not look down the Sea?
'T is deep, and most creative; what eludes

In the upper solitudes,
Still lurking in the lower wastes may be!
Ye look for God, ye tell me. Tell me this, —
How know ye that He is?
Because your fathers told ye so, and they
Because, of old, their fathers told them so;
As it is now, so was it long ago,
And will be when the years have passed away.

Nothing can come from nothing. Well, what
then?
The Earth, with all its men, —
The little insect burrowing in the sod, —
Sun, planet, star,
All things that are,
Must have been made by God!
Why made by Him? Who saw them made?
Who saw the deep foundations laid?
The Hands that built the wall?
Why made at all?
Why not Eternal, — tell me? Not because
It must created be:
If so Eternal He, —

But why Eternal? — why not also This?
Why must the All be His?
It was, and is, and is, because it was!

There is no God then? Nay,
You say it, and not I;
I do but say
We have not yet beheld this God on High:
Not knowing that He is, we live and die!
If we know nothing of Him, yet we feel.
We feel love's kisses sweet, —
The wine that trips our feet, —
The murderous thrust of steel: —
Gladness about the heart when the sun breaks,
Or the soft moon is floating up the skies,
Delight in the wild sea, in tranquil lakes,
In every bird that flies;
And hot tears in our eyes,
When love, the best of earth, its last kiss over, dies!
But He whom we name God, and grope so for above,
Whose arm, we fear, is Power, whose heart, we hope, is Love,

On the worlds below Him,
In the dust before Him,
We may adore Him,
We cannot know Him,
If, indeed, He be, to bless or curse,
And be not this tremendous Universe!

"Higher than your arrows fly,
Deeper than your plummets fall,
Is the Deepest, the Most High,
If the All in All!"

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE.

(April 23, 1564.)

SHE sat in her eternal house,
The sovereign mother of mankind;
Before her was the peopled world,
The hollow night behind!

"Below my feet the thunders break,
Above my head the stars rejoice;
But man, although he babbles much,
Has never found a voice!

"Ten thousand years have come and gone,
And not an hour of any day
But he has dumbly looked to me
The things he could not say!

"It shall be so no more," she said.
And then, revolving in her mind,
She thought: "I will create a child
Shall speak for all his kind."

It was the springtime of the year,
And lo! where Avon's waters flow,
The child, her darling, came on earth
Three hundred years ago.

There was no portent in the sky,
No cry, like Pan's, along the seas,
Nor hovered round his baby mouth
The swarm of classic bees!

What other children were, he was;
If more, 't was not to mortal ken;
The being likest to mankind
Made him the man of men!

They gossiped, after he was dead,
An idle tale of stealing deer;
One thinks he was a lawyer's clerk;
But nothing now is clear,

Save that he married, in his youth,
A maid, his elder; went to town;
Wrote plays; made money; and at last
Came back, and settled down,

A prosperous man, among his kin,
In Stratford, where his bones repose;
And this — what can be less? — is all
The world of Shakespeare knows!

It irks us that we know no more, —
For where we love, we would know all;
What would be small in common men,
In great is never small.

Their daily habits, — how they looked, —
The color of their eyes and hair, —
Their prayers, their oaths, — the wine they drank, —
The clothes they used to wear, —

Trifles like these declare the men,
And should survive them, — nay, they must;
We 'll find them somewhere; if it needs,
We 'll rake among their dust!

Not Shakespeare's! He hath left his curse
On him disturbs it: let it rest, —
The sacredest that ever Death
Laid in the earth's dark breast!

Not to himself did he belong,
Nor does his life belong to us;
Enough he *was;* give o'er the search
If he were thus, or thus.

Before he came, his like was not,
Nor left he heirs to share his powers;
The mighty mother sent him here,
To be her voice and ours!

To be her oracle to man;
To be what man may be to her;
Between the Maker and the made
The best interpreter.

The hearts of all men beat in his,
Alike in pleasure and in pain;
And he contained their myriad minds, —
Mankind in heart and brain!

Shakespeare! What shapes are conjured up
By that one word! They come and go,
More real, shadows though they be,
Than many a man we know.

Hamlet the Dane, unhappy Prince,
Who most enjoys when suffering most:
His soul is haunted by itself, —
There needs no other Ghost!

The Thane, whose murderous fancy sees
The dagger painted in the air;
The guilty king, who stands appalled
When Banquo fills his chair!

Lear in the tempest, old and crazed, —
"*Blow winds! Spit fire, singe my white head!*"
Or, sadder, watching for the breath
Of dear Cordelia, dead!

The much-abused relentless Jew;
Grave Prospero, in his magic isle;
And she who captived Anthony, —
The serpent of old Nile!

Imperial forms, heroic souls,
Greek, Roman, — masters of the world;
Kings, queens; the soldier, scholar, priest;
The courtier, sleek and curled; —

He knew and drew all ranks of men,
And did such life to them impart
They grow not old, — immortal types,
The lords of life and art!

Their sovereign he, as she was his, —
The awful mother of the race,
Who, hid from all her children's eyes,
Unveiled to him her face;

Spake to him till her speech was known,
Through him till man had learned it; then
Enthroned him in her heavenly house,
The most supreme of men!

ADSUM.

(December 23–24, 1863.)

I.

THE Angel came by night,
(Such angels still come down!)
And like a winter cloud
Passed over London town;
Along its lonesome streets,
Where Want had ceased to weep,
Until it reached a house
Where a great man lay asleep;—
The man of all his time
Who knew the most of men,—
The soundest head and heart,
The sharpest, kindest pen.
It paused beside his bed,
And whispered in his ear;
He never turned his head,
But answered, "I am here."

II.

Into the night they went.
At morning, side by side,
They gained the sacred Place
Where the greatest Dead abide;
Where grand old Homer sits
In godlike state benign;
Where broods in endless thought
The awful Florentine;
Where sweet Cervantes walks,
A smile on his grave face;
Where gossips quaint Montaigne,
The wisest of his race;
Where Goethe looks through all
With that calm eye of his;
Where — little seen but Light —
The only Shakespeare is!
When the new Spirit came,
They asked him, drawing near,
"Art thou become like us?"
He answered, "I am here."

VATES PATRIÆ.

(November 3, 1794.)

THERE came a Woman in the night,
When winds were whist, and moonlight smiled,
Where in his mother's arms, who slept,
There lay a new-born child.

She gazed at him with loving looks,
And while her hand upon his head
She laid, in blessing and in power,
In slow, deep words she said: —

"This child is mine. Of all my sons
Are none like what the lad shall be;
Though these are wise, and those are strong,
And all are dear to me.

"Beyond their arts of peace and war
The gift that unto him belongs, —
To see my face, to read my thoughts,
To learn my silent songs.

"The eldest sisters of my race
Shall taunt no more that I am dumb;
Hereafter I shall sing through him,
In ages yet to come!"

She stooped, and kissed his baby mouth,
Whence came a breath of melody,
As from the closed leaves of a rose
The murmur of a bee!

Thus did she consecrate the child,
His more than mother from that hour,
Albeit at first he knew her not,
Nor guessed his sleeping power.

But not the less she hovered near,
And touched his spirit unawares;
Burned in the red of morning skies,
And breathed in evening airs.

Unfelt in his, her guiding hand
Withdrew him from the halls of men,
To where her secret bowers were built,
In wood and grove and glen.

Sometimes he caught a transient glimpse
Of her broad robe, that swept before,
Deep in the heart of ancient woods,
Or by the sounding shore.

One prosperous day he chanced to see
(Be sure 't was in a lonely place)
Her glance of pride, that sought his own,
At last her noble face!

Not as it fronts her children now,
With clouded brows, and looks of ire,
And eyes that would be blind with tears
But for their quenchless fire!

But happy, gracious, beautiful,
And more imperial than a queen;
A woman of majestic mould,
And most maternal mien.

And he was happy. For in her
("For he," she said, "shall read my mind")
He saw the glory of the earth,
The hope of human kind.

Thenceforth, wherever he might walk,
Through forest aisles, or by the sea;
Where floats the flower-like butterfly,
And hums the drowsy bee;

By rock-ribbed hills, and pensive vales
That stretch in shade between;
And by the soft-complaining brooks
That make the meadows green, —

He felt her presence everywhere,
To-day was glad, to-morrow grave;
And what she gave to him in thought,
To us in song he gave:

In stately songs, in solemn hymns
(Few are so clear, and none so high),
That mirrored her, in calm and storm,
As mountain lakes the sky.

And evermore one shape appeared,
To comfort now, and now command, —
A bearded man, with many scars,
Who bore a battle-brand!

And she was filled with serious joy,
To know her poet followed him;
Not losing heart, nor bating hope,
When others' faith was dim.

And as the years went slowly by,
And she grew stronger and more wise,
Stretching her hands o'er broader lands,
And grander destinies;

And he, our poet, poured his hymns,
Serene, prophetic, sad, — as each
Became a part of her renown,
And of his native speech;

She wove, by turns, a wreath for him, —
The business of her idle hours;
And here were sprigs of mountain pine,
And there were prairie flowers.

And now, even in her sorest need,
Pale, bleeding, faint in every limb,
She still remembers what he is,
And comes to honor him.

For hers, not ours, the songs we bring, —
The flowers, the music, and the light;
And 't is her hand that lays the wreath
On his gray head to-night!

AT GADSHILL.

(June 9, 1870.)

GADSHILL is famous. What of old
To the world's poet made it dear,
Whether what country gossips told,
Or stolen hours of cheer
Spent there with men of kindred mind,
Less, yet the largest of mankind, —

We know not, and we need not care:
Enough that Shakespeare loved the place,
And settled in possession there
The merriest of his race, —
Falstaff, — whose thirsty spirit still
Haunts all the taverns at Gadshill!

Could Shakespeare, with prophetic eyes,
Who were to follow him have seen,
And be, if not so great and wise, —
As what man since hath been? —
Yet wise and great in smaller ways,
The lords of life of coming days,

He would have chosen out of all
Dickens, as knowing, loving men,
And let on him the mantle fall
That was to vanish then!
Long lost, late found, now lost once more, —
Ah! who that mantle shall restore?

Sacred to all but Shakespeare's shade,
And to his ghosts of crownless kings
Abandoned, wretched queens betrayed,
And high, heroic things,
Is Stratford; let no mortal dare
Disturb its hushed and reverent air!

But Gadshill, whither Falstaff went
From Eastcheap (glad to hasten back),

Though plundered, still on plunder bent,
Puffed out with lies and sack, —
What spot of English earth so fit
For one with more than Falstaff's wit?

Nay, Shakespeare's self was not his peer
In that humane and happy art
To wake at once the smile and tear,
And captive hold the heart!
Make room, then, Shakespeare: this is he
Has taken the throne of mirth from thee.

The world of kings and queens is thine;
Thou hast the soldier's, scholar's ear;
England and Rome, Greece, "Troy divine,"
Hamlet, Othello, Lear:
Small elves that dance on yellow sands,
And all the spells of fairy lands!

This common work-day world of ours;
Our little lives of joy and care;
Green lanes, where children gather flowers;
And London's murky air;
Thieves, paupers, women of the town,
And the black Thames in which they drown; —

These were the things that Dickens knew;
  Before his sight like dreams they passed.
If saddened, he was gladdened too,
  For sorrow should not last.
Happy must be his heart and mind
Whose task it is to help his kind!

Healthy his nature was, above
  All shallow griefs and sympathies;
What others hated he could love,
  And what they loved despise.
His mirth was harder to be borne
Than Thackeray's sadness, Byron's scorn.

He taught the virtues, first and last;
  He taught us manhood more and more;
The simple courage that stands fast,
  The patience of the poor;
Love for all creatures, great and small,
And trust in Something over all!

This gave him more than royal sway;
  The benefactor of the race,

He would have wiped with smiles away
The tears from every face!
They drop to-day from many an eye;
He draws them, but he cannot dry!

The hand is still that held his pen,
His eyes are shut, but not in sleep;
Weeping around his bed are men
Who do not often weep!
Laughter no more the house shall fill,
For Death is master at Gadshill!

TWILIGHT ON SUMTER.

(August 24, 1863.)

STILL and dark along the sea
Sumter lay:
A light was overhead,
As from burning cities shed,
And the clouds were battle-red,
Far away.

Not a solitary gun
Left to tell the fort had won,
Or lost the day!
Nothing but the tattered rag
Of the drooping Rebel flag,
And the sea-birds screaming round it in their play.

How it woke one April morn,
Fame shall tell;
As from Moultrie, close at hand,
And the batteries on the land,
Round its faint but fearless band
Shot and shell
Raining hid the doubtful light;
But they fought the hopeless fight
Long and well,
(Theirs the glory, ours the shame!)
Till the walls were wrapt in flame,
Then their flag was proudly struck, and Sumter fell!

Now — O look at Sumter now,
In the gloom!
Mark its scarred and shattered walls,

(Hark! the ruined rampart falls!)
There 's a justice that appalls
In its doom;
For this blasted spot of earth
Where Rebellion had its birth
Is its tomb!
And when Sumter sinks at last
From the heavens, that shrink aghast,
Hell shall rise in grim derision and make room!

A CHRISTMAS HYMN FOR AMERICA.

NOT as of old we keep the day
Whereon the Prince of Peace was born,
Whose kingdom comes not! Let us pray
It comes this holy morn:
Let us begin it; make our brawlings cease,
And kill the hate that lurks behind the mask of
Peace!

Men of the South, if you recall
The fields your valor won in vain,
Unchecked the manly tears may fall
Above your heroes slain!
Weep! but remember we had heroes too,
As sadly dear to us as yours can be to you!

Men of the North, whose sons and sires,
Victorious in a hundred fights,
Gather no more about your fires
In the long winter nights;
If some you loved are missing here and there,
No household at the South but mourns its vacant chair!

By all the blood that has been shed,
And will be till contentions cease,
Bury your anger with the dead,
And be again at peace!
So, with your muskets rusting on the wall,
Your State shall be secure when greatest empires fall!

THE COUNTRY LIFE.

NOT what we would, but what we must,
Makes up the sum of living;
Heaven is both more and less than just
In taking and in giving.
Swords cleave to hands that sought the plough,
And laurels miss the soldier's brow.

Me, whom the city holds, whose feet
Have worn its stony highways,
Familiar with its loneliest street, —
Its ways were never my ways.
My cradle was beside the sea,
And there, I hope, my grave will be.

Old homestead! — in that old, gray town,
Thy vane is seaward blowing;
Thy slip of garden stretches down
To where the tide is flowing:
Below they lie, their sails all furled,
The ships that go about the world.

Dearer that little country house,
Inland, with pines beside it;
Some peach-trees, with unfruitful boughs,
A well, with weeds to hide it:
No flowers, or only such as rise
Self-sown, — poor things! — which all despise.

Dear country home! can I forget
The least of thy sweet trifles?
The window-vines that clamber yet,
Whose blooms the bee still rifles?
The roadside blackberries, growing ripe,
And in the woods the Indian Pipe?

Happy the man who tills his field,
Content with rustic labor;
Earth does to him her fulness yield,
Hap what may to his neighbor.
Well days, sound nights, — oh! can there be
A life more rational and free?

Dear country life of child and man!
For both the best, the strongest,
That with the earliest race began,
And hast outlived the longest:

Their cities perished long ago;
Who the first farmers were we know.

Perhaps our Babels too will fall;
If so, no lamentations,
For Mother Earth will shelter all,
And feed the unborn nations!
Yes, and the swords that menace now
Will then be beaten to the plough.

AN INVOCATION.

I.

BEFORE THE SHRINE.

WHAT and whence this life of ours?
Is it Life, and Death at last?
Or a dream that binds us fast
In the heavy midnight hours?
Shadow of a vanished day,
Or a coming, gone astray

In the sleep of the High Powers?
Great Ones! — surely, such ye be,
Hear, and, hearing, answer me!
Answer me, O answer me!

[*Wide their lips were, and their eyes,*
That benignant looked, and wise;
But, false or true, no answer fell:
Silent was the Oracle.]

II.

BEFORE THE STATUE OF ISIS.

And this dread thing which men call Death?
Like but longer than all Sleep, —
Shrouded eyes, that fail to weep, —
Lips that kiss not, without breath, —
Feet that run no more to ill, —
Hands that nor caress, nor kill!
Tell me, is it something done?
Or, sadder, something more begun?
Give me what the Goddess saith,
Powerful over Life and Death.
Life and Death, O Life and Death!

[*Mighty did the Mother stand,*
With her foot on sea and land,—
Brow uplifted to the skies,
With their secret in her eyes.
What she saw and said that day,
None of her pale priests could say:
They lay like dead men. If there fell
Answer from her lips, 't was well:
But what it was no tongue can tell.]

A CATCH.

(*Sung by the Clown in the Interlude of "No Fool like an Old Fool."*)

ONCE the head is gray
And the heart is dead,
There 's no more to do:
Make the man a bed
Six foot under ground,
There he 'll slumber sound.

Golden was my hair,
And my heart did beat

To the viol's voice
  Like the dancers' feet.
Not colder now his blood
Who died before the flood.

Fair, and fond, and false,
  Mother, wife, and maid:
Never lived a man
  They have not betrayed!
None shall 'scape my mirth
But old Mother Earth.

Safely housed with her,
  With no company
But my brother Worm,
  Who will feed on me,
I shall slumber sound,
Deep down under ground.

THE KING IS COLD.

I.

RAKE the embers, blow the coals,
Kindle at once a roaring fire:
Here 's some paper, — 't is nothing, Sire;
Light it, (they 've saved a thousand souls!)
Run for fagots, you scurvy knaves,
There are plenty out in the public square, —
You know they fry the heretics there,
(But God remembers their nameless graves!)
Fly, fly! or the King may die!
Ugh! his royal feet are like snow,
And the cold is mounting up to his heart,
(But that was frozen long ago!)
Rascals, varlets, do as you 're told, —
The King is cold!

II.

His bed of state is a grand affair,
With sheets of satin and pillows of down,
And close beside it stands the crown;

But that won't keep him from dying there!
His hands are wrinkled, his hair is gray,
And his ancient blood is sluggish and thin;
When he was young it was hot with sin,
But that is over this many a day!
Under these sheets of satin and lace
He slept in the arms of his concubines;
Now they rouse with the Prince instead,
Drinking the maddest, merriest wines.
It 's pleasant to hear such catches trolled,
Now the King is cold!

III.

What shall I do with his Majesty now?
For, thanks to my potion, the man is dead:
Suppose I bolster him up in bed,
And fix the crown again on his brow?
That would be merry! — but then the Prince
Would tumble it down, I know, in a trice:
'T would puzzle the Devil to name a vice
That would make his excellent Highness wince!
But hark! he's coming, — I know his step:
He 's stealing to see if his wishes are true:

Ah, Sire, may your father's end be yours!
(With just such a son to murder you!)
Peace to the dead! Let the bells be tolled, —
The King is cold!

THE MESSENGER AT NIGHT.

A FACE at the window,
A tap on the pane:
Who is it that wants me
To-night in the rain?

I have lighted my chamber,
And brought out my wine,
For a score of good fellows
Were coming to dine.

The dastards have failed me,
And sent in the rain
The man at the window,
To tap on the pane!

I hear the rain patter,
  I hear the wind blow;
I hate the wild weather,
  And yet I must go!

I could moan like the wind now,
  And weep like the rain,
But the Thing at the window
  Is tapping again!

It beckons, I follow.
  Good by to the light!
I am going, oh! whither?
  Out into the night!

OUT TO SEA.

THE wind is blowing east,
  And the waves are running free;
Let 's hoist the sail at once,
  And stand out to sea,
    (You and me!)

I am growing more and more
A-weary of the shore;
It was never so before, —
Out to sea!

The wind is blowing east,
How it swells the straining sail!
A little farther out
We shall have a jolly gale!
(Cling to me!)
The waves are running high,
And the gulls, how they fly!
We shall only see the sky
Out to sea!

The wind is blowing east
From the dark and bloody shore,
Where flash a million swords,
And the dreadful cannon roar!
(Woe is me!)
There 's a curse upon the land!
(Is that blood upon my hand?)
What *can* we do but stand
Out to sea?

A GREEK SONG.

DEMETRIUS to his men,
In the sun's setting light:
"Go, brave ones, to the water,
And eat your bread to-night.

"But nephew dear, Lamprakes,
Come sit beside me here;
Gird on my arms and use them,
No kin of mine should fear.

"Come, take my sword, brave comrades,
(I think ye find it red!)
And cut me down green branches,
And spread them for my bed.

"Fetch a priest to confess me
While I am still alive.
Thirty years a soldier,
A robber twenty-five.

"But now I feel death coming,
And I must shortly die;
Make wide my tomb, remember,
And let its roof be high.

"Give me room to load my musket,
And stand erect to fight:
Be sure you leave a window,
And leave it on the right,

"To entice the merry swallows
To bring the spring that way,
And the nightingale to warble
In the good month of May!"

WANDERING along a waste
Where once a city stood,
I saw a ruined tomb,
And in that tomb an urn,—

A sacred funeral urn,
Without a name or date,
And in its hollow depths
A little human dust!

"Whose dust is this," I asked,
"In this forgotten urn?
And where this waste now lies
What city rose of old?"

None knows; its name is lost;
It was, and is no more;
Gone like a wind that blew
A thousand years ago!

Its melancholy end
Will be the end of all;
For, as it passed away,
The Universe will pass!

Its sole memorial
Some ruined world like ours;
A solitary urn,
Full of the dust of men!

LOVE THY NEIGHBOR.

"'LOVE thy neighbor as thyself.'
When at dawn I meet her,
As by the garden wall she stands,
And gives me flowers across the wall,
My heart goes out to kiss her hands, —
Are hands or flowers the sweeter? —
I 'm ready at her feet to fall,
And like a clown to labor!
Better than I love myself
Do I love my neighbor!"

"'Love thy neighbor as thyself.'
When at dawn I meet him,
As by the garden wall he stands,
And takes my flowers across the wall,
My soul 's already in his hands, —
It flew so fast to greet him!
And O, I grow so proud and tall,
And my heart beats like a tabor!
Better than I love myself
Do I love my neighbor!"

WHAT 'S MY LOVE LIKE?

TELL me, what 's my love like?
A lily of the May,
That does not shun the kissing sun,
Yet keeps its dew all day?
Yes, and no;
Fond is she, and coy is she,
But — whisper low —
She is more than this to me,
So, no lily shall she be.

But tell me, what 's my love like?
A little, cooing dove,
Who feels your breast her safest nest, —
A thing of fear and love?
Yes, and no;
Timid she, and tender she,
But — whisper low —
She is more than this to me,
So, no dove my love shall be.

O tell me, what 's my love like?
Perhaps a pearl of girls,
For whose sweet face the king would place
His crown upon her curls?
Yes, and no;
Worthy of a king is she,
But — whisper low —
She is more, and is for me,
So, no queen my dear will be.

HEAD OR HEART?

THE loving songs you sing to me
With such a subtile art,
My poet, are they from the head,
Or are they from the heart?

"From somewhere in the skies, —
It may be near, or far,
From cloud, or moon, or star, —
A misty Spirit flies,
When summer nights are deep,
And all are fast asleep, —

The Spirit of whom the flowers,
In the long, dim hours,
Dream, with their lips apart, —
Who gives, as he goes,
To lily and rose
With rapture dumb,
A kiss, that slips in the heart,
Where, when the morn is come,
We find it as dew, —
Pure, perfect, divine!
Such are these songs of mine."

Not from your heart, then, as you said,
False one! your songs, but from your head.

"Deep down beneath the sea,
Whose dreadful waves are whirled
About the roots of the world,
Where death and darkness be,
A little creature lurks,
Who upwards works, and works;
Thorough the waters vast,
Thorough the waters green,

Up, up, until at last
The light of day is seen, —
When lo! it has builded an isle
Above the seas,
Whereon the heavens smile,
And summer the whole year through
Hangs fruit on the trees,
And the isle is one great vine!
Such are these songs of mine."

And if your songs, so fine your art,
Are from the head, and from the heart,
I wonder now whence this is?
You answer me with kisses!

DRIFTING.

WELL, summer at last is over,
Gone like a long, sweet dream,
And I am slowly waking,
As I drift along the stream.

This *dolce far niente*
Has been too much for me;
Nothing done on my picture,
Except that doubtful tree!

I went to the glen with Gervase,
And sketched one afternoon,
And would have made sunset studies
But for the witching moon!

The moon did all the mischief.
The moment I see it shine,
With a pretty woman beside me,
My heart 's no longer mine!

But have I really lost it?
Or has it slipped away,
Like a child beguiled by summer,
Who will come home tired with play?

I wonder if I am feeling
The passion of my life?
Do I love that woman, Alice,
Enough to call her *wife?*

I think so, but I know not;
I only know 't is sweet
To lie, as I am lying,
In sunset, at her feet;

Watching her face, as, thoughtful,
She leans upon her hand,
(Is it herself or *me*, now,
She seeks to understand?)

While overhead the swallows
Fly home, with twittering cries,
And through the distant tree-tops
The moon begins to rise.

— If we could only stay so,
In such a happy dream,
I would not for worlds awaken, —
But drift along with the stream!

THE PROUD LOVER.

I NEVER yet could understand
How men could love in vain;
I hold it weak and wrong to love,
And not be loved again.
For me, I must have heart for heart,
Deny me that, and we must part.

There be who love, or think they love,
Without return for years;
They waste their days in fruitless sighs,
Their nights in hopeless tears.
Not such am I: my heart is free,
I love not her who loves not me!

I KNOW a little rose,
And O but I were blest
Could I but be the drop of dew
That lies upon her breast!

But I dare not look so high,
Nor die a death so sweet;
It is enough for me to be
The dust about her feet!

THE DYING LOVER.

THE grass that is under me now
Will soon be over me, sweet!
When you walk this way again
I shall not hear your feet.

You may walk this way again,
And shed your tears like dew;
They will be no more to me, then,
Than mine are now to you!

UNDER THE ROSE.

SHE wears a rose in her hair,
At the twilight's dreamy close:
Her face is fair, *how* fair
Under the rose!

I steal like a shadow there,
As she sits in rapt repose,
And whisper my loving prayer
Under the rose!

She takes the rose from her hair,
And her color comes and goes,
And I — a lover will dare
Under the rose!

EVEN-SONG.

YOU must have an even-song?
You must try to make it, then,
For to-night my thoughts are dumb;
Not a tuneful word will come
From my tongue, or from my pen.
'T is the hour when all things sleep,
And the flowers are steeped in dew;
Thoughts are deep, but words are few,
For, like thought, they lie too deep.
Silence suits the season best;
Birds are silent in the nest;
Hearken! not a note is heard
From the throat of any bird
Save the distant nightingale,
And her music is a wail!
Better silence till the morrow
Than that mighty dirge of sorrow!
Let *our* singing, then, go by,
Since the prelude is a sigh;
Yet, since you have waited long,
Take this kiss for even-song!

UNDER THE TREES.

WHEN the summer days are bright and long,
And the little birds pipe a merry song,
'T is sweet in the shady woods to lie,
And gaze at the leaves and the twinkling sky,
Drinking the while the rare, cool breeze,
Under the trees, under the trees!

When winter comes, and the days are dim,
And the wind is singing a mournful hymn,
'T is sweet in the faded woods to stray,
And tread the dead leaves into the clay,
Thinking of all life's mysteries
Under the trees, under the trees!

Summer or winter, day or night,
The woods are an ever-new delight;
They give us peace, and they make us strong, —
Such wonderful balms to them belong:
So, living or dying, I 'll take mine ease
Under the trees, under the trees!

A BEGGAR SONG.

I AM a ragged beggar
My heart is bold and light;
I live upon the highway,
And sleep in barns at night.

I eat behind the hedges
My scraps of bread and meat,
And drink, when very thirsty,
The water at my feet.

But, money in my pocket,
And none to tell the tale,
I hie me to the alehouse,
And drink my fill of ale!

I frown upon the tapsters,
I laugh and shout and sing;
For, give a beggar money,
He 's mighty as a king!

BIRDS.

IF I could be a bird,
I know the bird I'd be,—
An eagle on the mountains,
A petrel on the sea!

The petrel dares the waves,
The eagle dares the wind:
Their bravery and danger
Suit my stormy mind!

I AM dreary and gray,
And my thoughts fly away,
Like a long flight of cranes,
In a dark autumn day!

They may go till they find
The warm sunshine and wind,
But the autumn remains,
And my darkness of mind!

IT is a winter night,
And the stilly earth is white
With the blowing of the lilies of the snow!
Once it was as red
With the roses summer shed,
But the roses fled with summer long ago!

We sang a merry tune,
In the jolly days of June,
And we danced adown the garden in the light:
Now December 's come,
And our hearts are dark and dumb,
As we huddle o'er the embers here to-night!

LEAVES.

WHAT is life, and what are we?
Only leaves upon a tree,
Green to-day, to-morrow sear,
Then we are no longer here!

Others, fair and brave as we,
Grew, of old, upon the tree;
Now they crumble in the mould,
With their histories untold.

So shall we: it is our lot
Thus to die and be forgot;
By and by the tree will fall,
One oblivion waits for all.

COURAGE AND PATIENCE.

LIFE is sad, because we know it,
Death, because we know it not;
But we will not fret or murmur, —
Every man must bear his lot.
Coward hearts, who shrink and fly,
Are not fit to live or die!

Knowing life, we should not fear it,
Neither death, for that 's unknown;
Courage, patience, — these are virtues
Which for many sins atone.
Who has these — and have not I? —
He is fit to live and die!

WHAT shall I do to live aright?
My life is wrong, I feel it so;
I bear about a muffled woe,
I perish with a nameless blight.

When I was young I suffered more,
But I was happier, wiser then;
I lived my life like other men,
I bore the burdens that they bore.

There was a sweetness then in tears,
There was a bitterness in pain;
Nor sweet nor bitter now remain,
They perished with my early years.

I lived, I knew not how; but now
I know too well the way I live;
But what does all my knowledge give?
A hollow heart, an aching brow.

This is my sorrow day and night,
The secret of my troubled song,
"My life is wrong! My life is wrong;
What shall I do to make it right?"

TO BAYARD TAYLOR.

ON HIS FORTIETH BIRTHDAY.

"WHOM the gods love die young," we have been told,
And wise of some the saying seems to be,
Of others foolish ; as it is of thee,
Who proven hast whom the gods love live old.
For have not forty seasons o'er thee rolled,
The worst propitious, — setting like a sea
Toward the haven of prosperity,
Now full in sight, so fair the wind doth hold ?
Hast thou not Fame, the poet's chief desire ;
A wife whom thou dost love, who loves thee well ;
A child in whom your differing natures blend ;
And friends, troops of them, who respect, admire ?
(How deeply *one*, it suits not now to tell,)
Such lives are long, and have a perfect end.

TO EDMUND CLARENCE STEDMAN.

(With Shakespeare's Sonnets.)

HAD we been living in the antique days,
With him, whose young but cunning fingers penned
These sugared sonnets to his strange-sweet friend,
I dare be sworn we would have won the bays.
Why not? We could have turned in amorous phrase
Fancies like these, where love and friendship blend,
(Or were they writ for some more private end?)
And this, we see, remembered is with praise.
Yes, there 's a luck in most things, and in none
More than in being born at the right time;
It boots not what the labor to be done,
Or feats of arms, or art, or building rhyme.
Not that the heavens the little can make great,
But many a man has lived an age too late!

TO JAMES LORIMER GRAHAM, JR.

(With Shakespeare's Sonnets.)

WHAT can I give him, who so much hath given, —
That princely heart, so over-kind to me,
Who, richly guerdoned both of earth and heaven,
Holds for his friends his heritage in fee?
No costly trinket of the golden ore,
Nor precious jewel of the distant Ind:
Ay me! These are not hoarded in my store,
Who have no coffers but my grateful mind.
What gift then, — nothing? Stay, this book of song
May show my poverty and thy desert,
Steeped as it is in love, and love's sweet wrong,
Red with the blood that ran through Shakespeare's heart.
Read it once more, and, fancy soaring free,
Think, if thou canst, that I am singing thee!

COLONEL FREDERICK TAYLOR.

GETTYSBURG, JULY 3, 1863.

MANY the ways that lead to death, but few
Grandly, and only one is glory's gate,
Standing wherever freemen dare their fate,
Determined, as thou wert, to die — or do!
This hast thou passed, young soldier, storming through
The fiery darkness round it; not too late
To know the invaders beaten from thy State, —
Ah, why too soon to rout them and pursue?
But some must fall as thou hast fallen; some
Remain to fight and fall another day;
And some go down in peace to their long rest.
If 't were not now, it would be still to come;
And whether now, or when thy hairs were gray,
Were fittest for thee, God alone knows best.

TO JERVIS McENTEE, ARTIST.

JERVIS, my friend, I envy you the art
Which you profess, and which possesses you,
To mimic Nature; unto her so true,
Your pictures are what she is to the heart,
The mystery of which it is a part,
That gladdens when we crush the vernal dew,
And saddens when leaves fall and flowers are few,
Nor quite forsakes us in the busy mart
Whence she is banished, save in slips of sky
That swim in mist, or drip in dreary rain,
No glimpse of peaks far off, nor forests nigh,
Only dark streets, strange forms, — a barren pain;
Till to my wall I turn a longing eye,
When you restore me mountains, woods again!

FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE.

ENGLAND, if Time from out the Book of Fame
Should blot the desperate valor of thy men
In the Crimea, an Englishwoman's name,
As sweet as ever came from poet's pen,
Would still defy him, — Florence Nightingale!
Honor to that fair girl, whose pitying heart
Led her across the sea, to ease the smart
Of soldier wounds, and hush the soldier's wail.
Men can be great when great occasions call:
In little duties women find their spheres,
The narrow cares that cluster round the hearth;
But this dear woman wipes a woman's tears,
And wears the crown of womanhood for all.
Happy the land that gave such goodness birth!

TO A FRIEND.

With a Vase.

POET, take this little vase,
From a lover of the race,
Given to hold — a funeral jar —
The ashes of thy loved cigar.
If for that it seem too fine,
Fill it to the brim with wine,
And drink, in love, to me and mine,
As I drain to thee and thine.
Ashes, though, may suit it best
(There 's a plenty in my breast) ;
Fill it, then, in summer hours,
With the ashes of thy flowers, —
Roses, such as on it blow,
Or lilies, like its ground of snow !

IN MEMORIAM.

I AM followed by a spirit,
In my sorrow and my mirth;
'T is the spirit of an infant,
Dying almost at its birth,
Unlamented, yet how dear,
Since, unseen, I know 't is near!

Would, if only for a moment,
As I feel it, I could see,
In the light of heavenly beauty,
Sitting on its father's knee!
It would dry this hopeless tear,
Dropping now, it is so near!

I.

WHAT shall I sing, and how,
Of what I suffer now?
To nature trust, or art,
The burden of my heart?

'T is three weeks now, but *three*,
Since he was here with me:
The dreadful time has flown,
And now I am alone!

I left him in the morn,
(Not knowing how forlorn!)
There in his little bed,
Weak, sick, but O, *not* dead!

When I came back at noon,
(Too late, and yet so soon!)
They met me on the stairs,
Like Judgment unawares!

I stopped. "Your Will is dead!"
"It cannot be," I said.
It *could*, it *was*, — ah, why?
What had he done to die?

I knelt beside his bed,
I kissed his royal head,
His hand, his feet, his arm, —
The body yet was warm!

I wept! But did I weep?
Or was my grief too deep?
I only know I cursed;—
Pray Heaven that was the worst!

And shall I sing of this?
Or of the dark abyss
In which I grope apart,
Hugging my broken heart?

Not now, whate'er I may
In some far distant day;
Enough what here appears,
Drowned in these bitter tears!

II.

The Christmas-time drew slowly near,
The happy days we loved to see;
Thrice had we had a Christmas-tree,
The evergreen of all the year.

"What have you brought me?" asked the boy
When I came home at night; and I
Made some, I know not what, reply,
The promise of a future toy.

"You must not ask me any more,"
I said at last; "but wait and see,
When Christmas comes, your Christmas-tree,
For you shall have it as before."

We meant to have a tiny one,
With pendent toys and lighted boughs;
But darkness fell upon the house,
For Death, in passing, took my son!

Nathless he had his Christmas-tree;
For pines within the graveyard stand,
Above his bed of yellow sand,
Beside the moaning of the sea.

III.

"*Come unto these yellow sands,*"
Not to sing a fairy song,
As when summer nights are sweet,
Keeping time with flying feet;
But to wring your hands,
Now the nights are long,
And the winds of winter blow,
Whirling round the drifts of snow,
Over him who lies below,
Buried (God have mercy!) in the yellow sands.

IV.

I sit in my lonesome chamber
This stilly winter night,
In the midst of quaint old volumes,
With the cheery fire in sight!

In the darkened room behind me,
My darling lies asleep,
Worn out with constant weeping, —
'T is now my turn to weep!

What do I weep for? Nothing!
Or a very common thing;
That the little boy I loved so,
Like a dove has taken wing!

He used to sleep beside us,
In reach of his mother's hand;
They have moved his bed, — ah, whither?
And made him one in the sand!

Why did n't they make mine also?
I 'm sure I want to go:
But no, I must live for his mother,
For she needs me still, I know.

For her I must bear my sorrow,
Nor weep, when she can see;
She grieves too much already,
To waste a sigh for me!

V.

You think — I see it by your looks —
That I am buried in my books,
Wherein, as when he lived, I find
An easy solace for my mind.

It is not so. I try, indeed,
What charmed me once again to read;
Page after page I turn in vain, —
They leave no meaning in my brain.

I see the words; they come and go,
In dark procession, sad and slow,
Like mourners at a funeral, —
I know *who* lies beneath the pall!

I dally with my books, and why?
Read you the reason in my eye:
Because I would do *more* than weep;
Grief, even for *him*, may be *too* deep!

Had *I* been taken, what would *he*,
Dear heart! be doing now for me?
His few tears dried (the blow being new
We 'll grant he sheds a tear or two),

He would have smiled as heretofore,
And soon have talked of me no more:
Like other little orphan boys,
He would be playing with his toys!

Should I, a child of larger growth
(You know you called us children, both),
Be, in my grief, less wise than he?
Or you be harder, love, with me?

Then chide not, as you have to-day,
For poring o'er my books, but say,
"His ways remind me of the boy's;
For see, he 's playing with his toys!"

VI.

What shall we do when those we love
Are gone to their seraphic rest?
Since we must live, what life is best
Before the clearer eyes above?

Shall we recall them as they were, —
The day, the hour, the dreadful blow
That, dealt in darkness, laid them low, —
The coffin and the sepulchre ?

Or shall we rather (say, we can)
Be what we used to be of old ?
Work, one for love, and one for gold —
The tender woman, worldly man ?

Shall we be jealous if the heart
Lets go a moment of its dead ?
Mistrust it, and revile the head,
And say to all but Death, "*Depart*" ?

Or shall we willing be to take
What good we may in common things, —
Blue skies, the sea, a bird that sings,
And other hearts that do not break ?

What God approves, methinks, I know
(If aught we do approved can be),
But since my child was taken from me,
My only pleasure is in woe : —

My tortured heart, my frenzied head,
For when, as now, a smile appears,
I would be drowned in endless tears,
Or, happier, with my darling dead!

VII.

We sat by the cheerless fireside,
Mother, and you, and I;
All thinking of our darling,
And sad enough to die!

He lay in his little coffin,
In the room adjoining ours;
A Christmas wreath on his bosom,
His brow in a band of flowers.

"We bury the boy to-morrow,"
I said, or seemed to say;
"Would I could keep it from coming
By lengthening out to-day!

"Why can't I sit by the fireside,
As I am sitting now,
And feel my gray hairs thinning,
And the wrinkles on my brow?

"God keep him there in his coffin
Till the years have rolled away!
If he *must* be buried to-morrow,
O let me die to-day!"

VIII.

It looks in at the window,
Divinely bright and far,
The loving star of Venus,
Our little Willy's star!

He used to watch its rising,
As we have done to-night;
Its lustrous, steel-blue twinkle,
Its steady heart of light!

"O mamma, there is Venus!"
Methinks I hear him cry,
As he leads us to the window,
To watch his brighter eye!

And once we saw him kneeling
Before it, in his chair,
Folding his hands together,
And making some sweet prayer!

What did he ask you, Venus?
To take his soul away?
Or, feeling he must leave us,
Perhaps he prayed to stay!

God knows; *you* cannot tell us,
And *he* is gone afar;
And we are left in sorrow,
To gaze upon his star!

IX.

What shall I do next summer?
What will become of me
When I draw near my cottage,
Beside the solemn sea?

Along the dusty roadside
I shall not see him run,
To greet his loving father,
So proud to meet his son!

No longer in the distance
I 'll strain my eager eyes,
To catch him at the window,
And mark his sweet surprise.

The gate how can I enter?
  How bear to touch the door
That opens in the chambers
  Where he is seen no more?

When last I crossed the threshold
  (I 'm glad I did not take
His dear dead body thither!)
  I thought my heart would break.

"My son was here last summer:
  He sat in yonder chair;
And there, beside the window,
  I kissed his golden hair!"

With every sweet remembrance
  There came a burst of tears;
There is but one such tempest
  In all our stormy years.

I kissed the chair he sat in,
  The spot his feet had trod;
I clutched the empty darkness
  To pluck him back from God.

O ruined heart and hearth-stone!
What will become of me,
In my deserted dwelling
Beside the dreadful sea?

X.

This book of dirges, if it
True to the hue of grief in me,
To what I am, my son, for thee,

Will be an endless stretch of plain,
Swept by the dreary autumn rain,
And winds that sob, like souls in pain!

No light, a blind sky overhead,
And everywhere a sense of dread:
For such my heart is, — broken, dead!

XI.

When first he died there was no day
That was not saddened by my tears:
"And 't will be thus," I said, "for years;
His memory cannot fade away."

That first wild burst of grief is o'er,
The spring is sealed of wretchedness ;
Not that I love my darling less,
But love, or think of, others more.

They move me as they could not then, —
My brain at least, if not my heart ;
And so I try to act my part
As patiently as lesser men.

Pale fathers pass me in the street,
Whose little sons, like mine, are dead ;
I see it in the drooping head,
And in the wandering of the feet!

XII.

The dreary winter days are past,
The cloudy sky, the bitter blast :
Gone is the snow, the sleet
That glazed each rugged street.

All things proclaim that Spring is near,
Rejoicing in the wakened Year :
Even *I*, whose tears are shed
Above the Winter dead !

Darker than now my death can be,
In that it took my boy from me, —
My heart it did not wring
Like this first breath of Spring!

What though the clouds were thick o'erhead,
And earth was iron to my tread,
Rains poured, snows whirled, winds blew,
And my great grief was new?

'T was still — if not a solace, yet
Something akin that laid regret:
It hushed my useless moan
To think I was alone!

When drove the snow, the thought would rise,
"It does not blind his little eyes!"
When winds were sharp I smiled;
"They cannot stab my child!"

Now Spring is come, I sigh and say,
"He cannot see this sunny day,
Nor feel this balmy air
That longs to kiss his hair!"

The tender spirit of the hour
That stirs the sap, and paints the flower,
Enfolding land and sea,
And quickening even me,

So stings my soul, I hold my breath,
And try to break the dream of death,
And stagger on his track
Until I snatch him back!

Great God! if *he* should feel it there,
(Where, *where*, — some angel tell me where?)
And struggle so for *me*,
How terrible 't would be!

OUT of the deeps of heaven
A bird has flown to my door,
As twice in the ripening summers
Its mates have flown before!

Why it has flown to my dwelling,
Nor it nor I may know;

And only the silent angels
Can tell when it shall go!

That it will not straightway vanish,
But fold its wings with me,
And sing in the greenest branches
Till the axe is laid to the tree,

Is the prayer of my love and terror,
For my soul is sore distrest,
Lest I wake some dreadful morning,
And find but its empty nest!

THE BOOK OF THE EAST.

PERSIAN SONGS.

SWEET are the garden spaces,
Lighted with happy faces:
Long may their faces shine,
The merry drinkers of wine!

The wind of the morning blows
Out of the heart of the rose:
My heart, or the rose at my feet,—
Which is the sweetest, Sweet?

But the rose will soon depart,
And leave its thorns in my heart;
Then I shall sigh, and wail,
And bleed, like the nightingale.

O nightingale, come with the dews!
Thy coming will be good news;
For lovers that cannot sleep
Listen to thee, and weep!

I CANNOT sing my songs alone,
Although my thoughts are free;
Nor yet when only men are by;
But in the light of woman's eye
The Muses favor me.

I am a very nightingale,
With woman at my feet;
And, like that voice of Beauty's bowers,
I feed on flowers — my woman-flowers —
To make my songs more sweet!

THE heart where love and patience dwell —
But such there cannot be —
I hold it not a heart, but stone,
It will not do for me.
Ah, no! a thousand pharsangs part
The loving and the patient heart.

What discipline shall I adopt
To ease this woe of mine?
I harken to the harp, in vain,
And drain the cups of wine;
I love, but cannot patient be,
Nor can the patient love like me!

NOT wholly, poet, from the eyes
Doth love arise:
For words create, though ne'er express,
This happiness.
Once at the portal of the ear,
Let love appear, —
There is no rest for heart, or brain,
Till loved again!
No need of sight, enough for me
To hear, not see.
The god I serve is painted blind,
To show his eyes are in his mind!

MY little soul, my lover, —
He does not hear me sigh :
Tell me the street he lives in,
At once to him I 'll fly !

If I can only find him,
He 's sure to hear my prayer :
Tell me the street you live in,
O Mirza, tell me where !

Give me a cup of wine, dear,
And listen to my plea ;
Say, when you love another,
You want no more of me !

TURKANNA ! in my sleep
I saw thee, and was blest ;
I kissed thy scented hair,
I laid upon thy breast !
Shall it be, or only seem ?
Pray expound that happy dream,
Beautiful Turkanna !

TWO strings for my guitar
I will spin from your hair;
What else can you expect
From a lover in despair?

You grant a "Yes!" to all,
But the man that is your own;
When I ask for a kiss,
It is "No!" to me alone!

Were I marble I would be
A floor where you might walk,
As stately as a cypress,
With an eye like a hawk!

You said that you would come,
Where is your promise, dear?
For lo! I am alone,
And the midnight is here!

YOUR hands are red with henna,
And you wear a Cashmere shawl;
Such gay and cruel colors
Become you best of all.

You stand in blooming beauty,
Like a mulberry-tree, my dear:
I 've eaten mulberries often,
But not enough this year!

We did not sit together,
Nor touch our knees again:
I talked with you so little
I could not tell my pain!

Come to me in the morning,
Again when day doth end:
Nobody, love, will mind it,
They 'll say you are my friend!

SHE does not hear my sighing,
My rose, my willow leaf;
And if she heard, — what matter?
She would not heal my grief.

Come to me, dear, when day breaks,
And when the day doth close;
I 'm drunken with your beauty,
O European Rose!

And if she 's from Arabia,
This little love of mine,
Her mouth shall be my wineglass,
Her kiss shall be my wine!

Her travelling-packs are ready,
She fastens on her shawl;
Were I the shawl I 'd hold her, —
She should not go at all!

When shall I see thee, darling,
And lighten my poor heart?
I come once more to whisper
Its secrets — and depart!

DO not yet put on your slippers, —
I shall die!
Do not take your veil, beloved,
Do not fly!
Ah! so sweet your conversation,
Do not go;
Stop a minute, Rose, my darling,
Leave not so!
'T is the very hour for prattle,
'T is the hour, —
O my darling! O my sweetest
Poppy flower!
See, the ceiling of the chamber
Painted fine;
Rose was never like your blushes,
Rose of mine!
O my sunflower! my belovéd,
Linger here:
Linger, — I have lost all patience,
All, my dear.

Sweetheart! 't is a lonely chamber,
No one near:
Rose of Khansar, sweet as amber,
Blossom here!
Hurry, hurry on the wedding,
Or I die;
Nay, I 'm dying, dead already,
If you fly!
Sweetheart, with your eyebrow bending,
Like a bow;
And your arrowy glances flying,
So, and so;
Stop, my love, another minute, —
Do not go!

I FELL in love with a Turkish maid,
(She sleeps, she does not wake.)
A scarlet turban covers her head,
(She sleeps, she does not wake.)
My eyes are red with tears,
And my sighs like smoke are driven, —

The smoke of my burning heart
Reaching the seventh heaven!
The happiness of the world
Awakes for her sweet sake;
But she, she,
Who is more than happiness to me, —
She sleeps, she does not wake!

I came and saw the maid asleep,
(For sometimes eyes forget to weep,
And hearts forget to ache;)
My arms embraced
Her slender waist,
And with my hands I pressed
The citrons of her breast:
(She slept, she did not wake!)
Who weds, they say, a maiden,
Has a world of sweets in store,
Fresh as the buds in May;
But the riper charms of widows
Are like the fruits of autumn
That drop from day to day!

I measure with my steps the shore ;
I hearken to the ocean's roar ;
My heart is like to break, —
She sleeps, she does not wake !

IT is a morn in winter,
The air is white with snow ;
And on the chinar branches
Jasmins seem to grow.

The furrowed fields and hill-tops
With icy treasures shine,
Like scales of silver fishes,
Or jewels in a mine.

The bitter wind has banished
The silent nightingale,
And the rose, like some coy maiden,
Is muffled in a veil.

Its silver song of summer
No more the fountain sings,
And frozen are the rivers
That fed the baths of kings !

No flower-girls in the market,
For flowers are out of date;
And the keepers of the roses
Have shut the garden gate.

No happy guests are drinking
Their goblets crowned with wine;
For gone are all the merchants
That sold the merry wine;

And gone the dancing maidens
Before the winds and snows:
Their summer souls have followed
The nightingale and rose!

JOY may be a miser,
But Sorrow's purse is free.
I had two griefs already,
He gave two more to me:
He filled my eyes with water,
He filled my heart with pain;
And then, the liberal fellow,
He promised to again!

THUS to waste the precious hours,
With the hues and scents of flowers,
Captured by the woman's eyes
That bestows them, is not wise.

Take the flowers that longest live,
And the sweetest odors give;
Scarce a summer's day they bloom,
Frailer still is woman's doom.

Therefore keep thy fancy free,
Woman knows not constancy:
This the soundest wits approve,
This is wise, — but not to love!

DAY and night my thoughts incline
To the blandishments of wine:
Jars were made to drain, I think,
Wine, I know, was made to drink!

When I die, (the day be far!)
Should the potters make a jar
Out of this poor clay of mine,
Let the jar be filled with wine!

THEY know me at the tavern,
No face so well as mine;
And in the drinking-cellars,
The king of all good fellows,
A worshipper of wine!

They lift me on their shoulders,
Those merry friends of mine;
And long as they are able
They pass me round the table,
Like some great skin of wine!

IN the market-place one day
I saw a potter stamping clay;
And the clay beneath his tread
Lifted up its voice, and said,
"Potter, gentle be with me,
I was once a man like thee!"

(*Sadi.*)

APART from all the creatures of the earth
I sit and weep aloud, and in my grief
My eyes send up to heaven their hopeless tears.

Even as a little boy, whose bird is flown
From out his hand, still weeps for that same bird, —
So I bewail my sweet but vanished life!

(*Hakim Sanayi.*)

WHAT sweetness is there in the honeycomb,
That is not tasted, sweet one, in thy kiss?

What beauty is there in the pheasant's walk,
That is not seen, beloved, in thy step?

What heart in all the city is not thine?
The heart that is not thine no longer beats!

The bird that flies not to thy nest of love
Deserves to fly no more: why has he wings?

TARTAR SONGS.

YES, we are merry Cossacks,
Though not the Russian breed;
But bring a steed from Ilmen,
And fatten the lean steed.

When we come back with plunder,
We are true Cossacks then:
We sleep in the arms of beauties,
My merry, merry men.

THE merry spring is here,—
Then come before it fades,
Pluck handfuls of red roses,
And kiss the lips of maids.

The lips of maids in spring
Are cardamoms and cloves;
Let each fair maid come hither,
And kiss the man she loves!

I AM drunk with thy fragrant breath,
Come hither, my girl, to me ;
Of all the girls that I know,
I have given my heart to thee!

In the fruits of beauty around,
Thou art my peach, and my pear ;
O, when wilt thou lie on my breast,
From dusk till dawn, my fair?

I WANDERED by a river,
And met a lady fair,
And she was busy bathing
Behind her veil of hair.

"If I should buy, sweet idol,
Your ringlets long and rare,
Tell me the price." She answered,
"A pearl for every hair!"

O FOLLOWER of the Prophet!
My heart is again on fire;
A certain man has a daughter,
Who kindles my desire.

How shall you find the Houri?
Easy enough, d' ye see;
Before the door of her dwelling
There grows a mulberry-tree!

COCK, do not flutter your wings,
It is too early to crow.
Is my darling asleep, or awake?
Unhappy! I do not know.

God strike thee dumb, O Cock!
That crowest ere morning beams;
You 've wakened me out of my sleep
And out of the happiest dreams!

HE rode from the Khora Tukhan
On his nimble bay steed,
For the eyes of his mistress, Girgalla,
Forsaking his creed.

He gave his broad belt to his comrade;
"Why scoff you?" he said.
The sheep are all killed for the wedding,
The dishes are spread.

I have sat in the rains and the thunders,
Alone, since she went.
I would I could sit down beside her,
Beneath the white tent!

When I lift to my lips the red tea-cup,
Slow sipping the tea,
I think of the lips of Girgalla,
And sigh, "Woe is me!"

I peeped through the snowy tent curtains,
Girgalla was there:
She stood like a peacock before me, —
No peacock so fair.

Your head on the lap of Girgalla,
Stretched out at your ease,
No cushion, you say, of swan's feathers
So soft as her knees!

BLOW, Wind, blow! —
And carry news of me
Away to Astrabad,
Away to my Sakina;
And as soon as you have seen her
Say, "A Tartar lad
Sends this kiss to thee!"
Then, your sweet lips prest
To her snowy breast,
Kiss her so — and so!

I AM a white falcon, hurrah!
My home is the mountains so high;
But away o'er the lands and the waters,
Wherever I please, I can fly.

I wander from city to city,
I dart from the wave to the cloud;
And when I am dead I shall slumber,
With my own white wings for a shroud!

I AM dying of the brand
Love has burned upon my heart;
Let me come to my death
By the girdle that you wear;
I must see you twice, or thrice,
Ere the day can depart,
Or I ask after you,
Of the birds in the air!

WAIL on, thou bleeding nightingale!
I join my wail with thine;
Deplore thy passion for the rose,
And let me weep for mine!

Lament thy rose for seventy days,
She lives, and may reply;
But mine is dead, and I must weep,
Or break my heart, and die!

FORGIVE me, mother dear,
For the days of unrest
And the sleepless nights you passed
When I sucked from your breast!

Dig my grave on a hill,
On the summit let it stand,
That the wind may blow my dust
To my own Tartar land!

ARAB SONGS.

O LOVELY fawn! O my gazelle!
O moon on summer seas!
Full moon whose beauty doth surpass
The Pleiades!

I swear an oath to fast a month
The day that I am blest,—
The happy day I press thee, dear,
Upon my breast!

O LORD MOHAMMED! gracefullest
Of all gazelles art thou!
Thy cheeks are like the roses,
And like the moon thy brow.

Thy shape is like the branches
Of the Indian walnut-tree;
And blest be He who made thee,
Although I die for thee.

BREAK thou my heart, ah, break it,
If such thy pleasure be ;
Thy will is mine, — what say I ?
'T is more than mine to me.

And if my life offend thee,
My passion and my pain,
Take thou my life, ah, take it,
But spare me thy disdain !

BELOVED, since they watch us,
For all we meet are spies,
And we can have no messengers,
Except our loving eyes,

I check my fiery feelings,
The words I must not speak,
Content to see, — I dare not pluck, —
The roses of thy cheek !

Give me a glance, belovéd,
Now none are near to see:
My downcast eyes will read my palms,
I will not look at thee.

It is not resignation,
It is the deepest art:
Be wary, then, and doubt no more,
But trust my loving heart.

THOU art my only love,
The world is nothing now:
In no walled garden grows
So fair a branch as thou.

Thou hast forgotten all,
Ah yes! it must be so:
She should have been my friend,
She has become my foe.

I've drunk the bitter cup,
Since we were parted, Sweet;
The tears I shed have made
This river at my feet!

Ah! long, long hours of love!
Ah! nights we stole from sleep! —
When such sweet nights are gone,
It is no shame to weep!

I HID my love when near you,
My pain for you sweet sake;
But now that you are absent,
My heart must speak, or break.
God save you from such passion!
It never knows despair;
For whether kind or cruel,
You are the only fair!

You will not see me, Sweetest,
Nor answer, when I call;
But I will follow, follow
Beyond the giant's wall!
Go, shut your door against me,
I will not doubt, or fear;
God still leaves one door open, —
The door of hope, my dear!

Could I have loved another,
That time is now no more;
I cover with my kisses
The threshold of your door.
Open the door of pity,
And hear my burning sigh,
For absent from you longer
Is sadder than to die!

"GIRL, I love thee!" Her reply
Was the saucy one, "You lie!
If you love me, as you say,
Why are you alive to-day?
I will tell you what to do:—
There will be no love in you
Till your blood is weak and thin,
And your bones prick through your skin;
Till you wither, heart and mind,
And are nearly deaf and blind,—
Scarcely hear them when they call,
And not answer them at all;

Till you never prate again
Of your love, and my disdain ;
No, nor breathe it in your sighs ;
Or at least until your eyes,
Blind with tears, that rain for me,
Shall your only vouchers be."

Master of the Universe !
If there a deeper curse
Than this terrible despair,
(Burden more than I can bear !)
O let Leila have her share ! —
Let my love divided be !
Half to her, and half to me ;
Or, if this be not her fate,
Let her neither love nor hate,
Only be indifferent, —
I will try to be content.

"Ah, but she is sick," you say.
Why was I not sent for, pray ?
There is danger in delay.
I have taken my degree

(Leila knows, my master, she), —
Let me her physician be.
These diseases of the heart
Are beyond the reach of art:
He who gives can cure the smart!

IF you meet my sweet gazelle,
By these signs you 'll know her well:
Eyes like arrows, black and bright,
Cheeks the fiery rose of night,
And her voice a silver bell.

I am burning with desire,
Like a parchment in the fire;
I am dying; hear my cry;
'T is for love of thee I die,
Emir's Daughter, — Peacock's Eye!

Heart of rocks! be soft to me,
Or my tears will soften thee, —
In my passion and my pain
Flowing down my cheeks like rain, —
And they will not flow in vain!

I know where her palace stands,
It is in the far-off lands,
Over mountains, over sands:
Seldom letters reach her there,
Never wretched lover's prayer!

I am dying, for no art
Can relieve my broken heart.
What I suffer none can tell,
Blasted by the fires of hell, —
By the love of that gazelle!

There's a stately palm that grows
Where the purest water flows:
She's its fruit: her lips are red
As the blush that rubies shed,
Or the west when day is dead!

Life and death are met in me,
But I only think of thee.
Let the happy fool complain,
What is dying? where's the pain?
I have lived, and loved in vain!

CHINESE SONGS.

UP in an old pagoda's highest tower
I sat, and watched the falling shades of eve.

Long curls of smoke, and sounds of distant lutes
As faint as smoke, spread through the lonely wood.

The evening wind blew over the cool stream,
Troubling the pallid pin-flowers on its bank;

And where the autumnal hills were thickly strewn
With faded, fallen leaves, the hoar-frost fell.

Naught could I see in all that cloudless sky,
Except the wild goose flying to the South.

Hearkening in bright moonshine I heard the sound
Of distant villagers beating out their rice.

Then, thinking of the friend, whose absent face,
The long year through, not once has brightened mine,

I sought the window shaded o'er with pines,
And struck the strings of my melodious lute.

(*Soo Hwuy.*)

WHAT time my husband went to banishment,
I followed to the foot of yonder bridge;
I bore my grief, but could not say, "Farewell!"

Ah! why have you not written me, my love?
Our couch, remember, even in spring is cold.
The staircase that you built has crumbled down,
And dust has soiled the windows, and white curtains.

My mind is sore perplexed; I would I were
The shadow of the moon upon the sea, —
The cloud that floats above the lofty hills.

The careless clouds behold my husband's face,
And she, the sea-moon, in her monthly round ;—
They know the man a thousand leagues away.

The tall green rushes by the river's side
Have faded, since we parted ; but the plum —
Who would have thought before we met again
The plum-tree would have blossomed, o'er and o'er ?

The flowers unfold themselves to meet the spring ;
Our hearts unfold in vain, no spring is ours.
My thoughts are busied so with your return
The willow at the door droops to the ground,
And no one sweeps away its fallen leaves.

The grass before the house grows thick and rank ;
My husband's flute hangs idle in the hall ;
He sings no more the songs of Keang-nan.

Because no letter comes to me, my lord,
My silver dress, that on my pillow lies,
Is dyed with tears, and tears have spoiled the flowers
Broidered in gold upon my satin robe.

Thrice have I heard in spring the wild-fowl's cry,
Crossing the swollen stream. I sing old songs;
My heart-strings seem to break upon the lute;
I faint with love, and grief; grief ends my song.

Forget not, O my lord, your own true wife,
Your wife, whose love is firmer than the hills,
Whose thoughts are filled with you. She weaves this song
To win the gracious ear of Majesty.
O Son of Heaven! let him return, and soon!

(*From the "Kang Chi."*)

I.

MOULAN is weaving at her cottage door.
You cannot hear the weaving shuttles fly,
You only hear the young girl sigh and moan.

"What are you thinking of? why do you moan?"
The young girl thinks of nothing, yet she moans.

"I saw the army record yesterday;
The Emperor is levying troops again;

The book has twelve long chapters, and in each
I saw enrolled my honored father's name.

"What can be done to save the poor old man?
Thou hast no grandson, father; no, not one.
Thou hast no elder brother, O Moulan!
What shall I do? I will arise, and go,
And buy a horse and saddle. I will go,
And serve, and fight, in my dear father's stead."

She buys a swift horse at the eastern market,—
A saddle and a horse-cloth at the western,
And at the southern a long horseman's whip.
When morning comes she smiles and says,
"Farewell,
Father and mother." She will pass the night
Beside the Yellow River. She hears no more
Father, or mother, calling for their child;
The hollow murmur of the Yellow River
Is all she hears. Another morning comes;
She starts again, and bids the stream farewell.
She journeys on, and when the evening comes
She reaches the Black River. She hears no more
Father, or mother, sighing for their child;
She hears the savage horsemen of Yen Shen.

II.

"Where have you been, Moulan, these twelve long years?"
"We marched and fought our way ten thousand miles.
Swift as a bird I cleared the gulfs and hills.
The north-wind brought the night bell to my ear;
The moonlight fell upon my iron mail.

"Twelve years are past. We meet the Emperor
When we return; he sits upon his throne.
He gives this man a badge of honor, that
An hundred or a thousand silver ounces.
'And what shall he give me?' And I reply:
'Nor wealth, nor office; only lend Moulan —
She asks no more — a camel, fleet of foot,
To lead her to her honored father's roof.'"

Soon as the father and the mother learn
Moulan's return they haste to meet their child;
Soon as the younger sisters see them go,
They leave the chamber in their best attire;
Soon as the brave young brother hears the news,
He straightway whets a knife to kill a sheep.

"My mother takes my warrior's armor off,
And clothes me in my woman's garb again:
My younger sisters, standing by the door,
Are twining golden flowers in their hair."

Then Moulan left the room, and went to meet
Her fellow-soldiers, who were much amazed; —
For twelve long years she marched and fought with them,
And yet they guessed not Moulan was a girl.

(*Yuen Yuen.*)

WE started when the clarion of the cock
Was ceasing, and the first thin curl of smoke
Rose from the village; not a withered leaf
Waved in the frozen forest, and no bird
Sang there, but flocks were lighting on the plain:
In vain they pecked for food, the barren plain
Bore naught but rotten grass; frost hid the roots;
So back they hastened to their empty nests.

The gray-haired village farmer, up at dawn
To fondle his grandchildren, hears the shout,
" A Mandarin is passing ! " Staff in hand
He gazes, leaning on his matted door.
West of his house we see great stacks of straw,
And in the east the golden beams of day ;
His thick warm garments, and his ruddy face,
Are signs of plenty, and, I shrewdly guess,
That somewhere in his house could still be found
One measure more of rice, stowed in the bin.

(*Keaa.*)

MILLIONS of flowers are blowing in the fields ; —
On the blue river's brink the peony !
Burns red, and where doves coo the lute is heard,
And hoarse black crows caw to the eastern wind.

Under the plane-tree in the shaded grove,
Screened from the light and heat, the idler sits,
Brooding above his chess-board all day long,
Nor marks, so deep his dream, how fast the sun
Descends at evening to its western house.

When autumn comes men close their doors and
read,
Or at the window loll to catch the breeze
Freighted with fragrance from the cinnamon.

The snow is falling on the balustrade,
Like dying petals, and the icicle
Hangs like a gem; all crowd around the fire:
Rich men now drink their wine with merry hearts,
And sing old songs, nor heed the blast without.

(*Too-Mo.*)

THE shadows of the swallows
Have crossed the autumn rivers,
Then let us climb the mountains,
And friend with friend carouse:
We 'll take a bottle with us,
And drink like merry fellows,
And stagger back at sunset,
With flowers about our brows.

But no ; let 's drain our bottles
At noon in this bright garden,
For dark and sad the sunsets
On distant mountains shine.
The days of old have vanished ;
Then drink, and laugh, to-day, boys,
Nor stain with tears your garments, —
They 're better stained with wine!

(*He-Kwan.*)

THE farmer cuts the So leaves,
And weaves his rainy cloak ;
His cot is on the hillside,
You see it by the smoke.

His rustic wife soon hails him,
"The nice boiled pears are done."
The children from the pea-field
To meet their daddy run.

In the shaded lake the fishes
Are swimming to and fro ;
The little birds brush each other,
As back to the hills they go.

Crowds will be going and coming,
In the happy season of flowers; —
But could I find the philosopher's stone,
I 'd fish in the brook for hours.

EAST, or west, to the pastures,
We lead our herds at ease;
Having no master to goad us,
We spend the time as we please.

In the green bamboos together
We cut our reeds, and play;
Or sit in the long grass patching
Our cloaks for a rainy day.

Or twist the ropes of the heifers,
And make them stout and long, —
Tuning our merry voices
To sing the herdsman's song.

We point at the restless miser,
And laugh in his face with glee:
"Your legs are mighty travellers!
What can the matter be?

"Ride who will on horseback,
The cow is sure and strong."
Thus, by the springs in the coppice,
We sing the herdsman's song.

BEFORE the scream o' th' hawk
The timid swallow flies;
And the lake unrolled in the distance
Like a silver carpet lies!

The light that sleeps i' th' air
Like the breath of flowers is sweet;
The very dust is balmy
Under the horses' feet!

We sit in the tennis court,
Where the beautiful sunlight falls;
The mountains crossed by bridges
Come down to the city walls.

The houses are hid in flowers,
Buried in bloomy trees;
But under the veils of the willows
Are glimpses of cottages.

What makes the wind so sweet?
Is it the breath of June?
'T is the jasper flute in the pear-tree,
Playing a silent tune!

THE dark and rainy weather
That now has ta'en its flight
Has made the sunshine brighter,
And filled our hearts with light.

The groves are full of song-birds,
And troops of butterflies
Are hovering o'er the peach-trees,
Like blossoms of the skies.

The flowers that have not faded,
But to the boughs still cling,
Are hanging every garden
With tapestries of spring.

And see, the happy students,
Have met by scores to dine
Beneath the willow branches,
And drain the cups of wine!

STRETCHED in flowers and moonlight,
The poet took his lute;
His mind was full of sweetness,—
A salver heaped with fruit!

"The odor of the blossoms,
It breathes upon my heart;
But the thoughts it quickens
No language can impart.

"The whiteness of the blossoms,
The young moon's virgin light,
They make me think of marriage,
The happy bridal night.

"I see a troop of damsels,
My own dear love I see:
They are willow branches,
A peach blossom, she."

IT grieves the bee and butterfly
Because they strive in vain
To hoard the scent of flowers,
Whose honeyed cups they drain!

The swallow and the loriot
Are not so swift of wing,
For the summer overtakes them,
As they chase the sweets of spring!

It is the King o' th' East, dear,
That makes the flowers to grow;
Nor can the rains prevent them,
Nor all the winds that blow!

NOW the wind is softest,
Lightest now the shower,
And in an hour the barren boughs
Begin to bud and flower.

Happy thoughts are brooding
On the song I sing,
As to the arch of yonder bridge
The mists of morning cling.

Pitiful the miser,
Who digs the earth for gold; —
For me, I 'd sooner hoard the snow,
So barren and so cold!

No, I love thee, Sweetest,
And the wandering dove; —
I send her with a sigh to thee,
A little verse of love.

"Go count the silken tresses
That hang on yonder tree;
So many are my loving thoughts,
And so they cling to thee!"

THE grove is crowned with hoar-frost,
And clothed in robes of snow;
But buds of tender purple
On all the branches blow.

They rain upon the river,
As winds go sweeping by,
Redden the waves a moment,
And then, like torches, die!

At the foot of yonder gallery
I see a beauteous girl;
She has a thousand garments
Of satin and of pearl!

The blossoms blush to meet her;—
It is the maiden Spring,
For hark! among the branches
I hear the cuckoo sing!

(*From the "Shi King."*)

I HEAR the sacred swan,
In its river island sing;
I see the modest maiden,
A consort for a king!

The tendrils of the Hang
Are green, and white below,
Along the running waters
Swaying to and fro.

The king has sought the maid,
His passion is so strong:
And day and night he murmurs,
"How long, alas! how long!"

He turns him on his bed,
He tosses in his woe;
His thoughts are like the Hang plants,
Swaying to and fro!

Again I hear the swan,
In a palace garden sing ;
Again I see the maiden,
The consort of the king!

The king is happy now,
For see! the maiden comes,
And hark! the bells are ringing,
And hark! the noise of drums!

THE END.

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